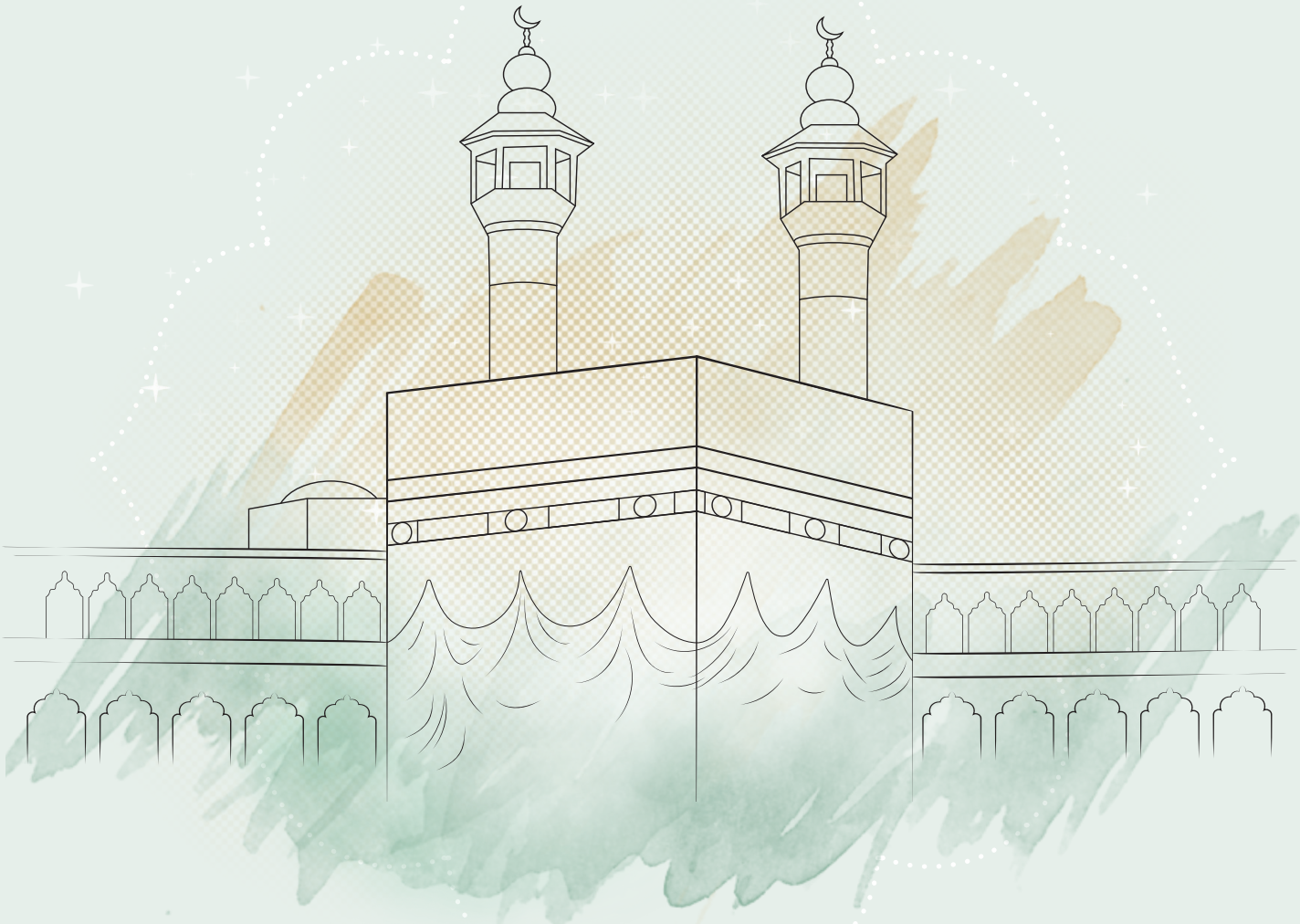
STEPS TO PERFECTION

An Islamic Curriculum For Youth

GRADE

8



Under the Guidance of

MOULANA NABI R. MIR (ABIDI)

AL-KISA FOUNDATION

UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

SABA

STEPS TO PERFECTION

An Islamic Curriculum for Youth

GRADE

8

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UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the beloved Imām of our time عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. May Allah ﷻ hasten his reappearance and help us to become his true companions.

Acknowledgments

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ:

"*On the Day of Resurrection, the ink of the scholars will be weighed up against the blood of the martyrs, and the ink of the scholars will be heavier than the blood of the martyrs.*"

(*Nahj al-Faṣāḥah*, Saying #3222)

We are especially thankful to the Kisa Australia Team, Kisa Mission Team, Shaykh Salim Yusufali, Shaykh Ehsan Ahmadi, Dr. Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, Srs. Urooj Kazmi, Samina Ali, Bhavani Ali, Sabika Mithani, Arifa Hudda, Fatima Falahati, Zahra Sabur, Liliana Villalvazo, Amna Hussain, Fatima Hussain, Zahra Eslami, Fathema Abidi, Zehra Abbas, Maryam Hakimpanah, Maryam Ershad, Zahra Memar, Rabab Jafri, Maria Al-Janabi, Shamama Zehra, Irum Abbas, Marwa Kachmar, Nida Syed, Zainab Hussain, Anjum Afzal, Sarah Silvaggi, Mina Mozaffarian, Aliya Dhanjy, Lina Dewjee, Sumiya Baqri, Sahar Zaidi, Yamna Jafri, Sana Abbas, Wajma Ahad, Rumina Hashmani, Maliha Abdi, Sakina Abdallah, Tasneem Hudda, Tahseen Shariff, Noor Nasrallah, Hanan Wazne, Swaleha Virjee, Farhana Mohamedali, Houra Khalife, Julie Karaki, Brs. Taymaz Tabrizi, Ali Alsamail, Abidali Mohamedali, Mohammad Abbas Virjee, Mohammad Hendijanifard, Mohamedtufayl Mohamedali, the Tabatabai family, all the illustrators who allowed us to use their illustrations, SABA, SABA Sunday School Team, RISE Academy, Kisa Kids syllabus committees, teachers, and staff for their support and assistance in the development and testing of the curriculum.

SABA and Al-Kisa Foundation are also very thankful to the Islamic organizations and schools of Ahlul Bayt at London-Stanmore, London-Hujjat, Vancouver, Minnesota, Toronto, and all others whose syllabus and books were used for the inspiration and creation of this curriculum.

Please remember all the people involved in this project in your prayers.

Authors and Editors: Dr. Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi) and Curriculum Committee

We pray to Allah to give us the strength and tawfīq to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With duʿās,

Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Transliteration Chart

Arabic terms in this book have been transliterated according to the following guidelines*:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)	ص	ṣ
ء	ʾ(medial or final form)	ض	ḍ
ا	a	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	ʿ
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	و	w
ش	sh	ي	y

ـَ	a	آ / ـَا / ىٰ	ā
ـِ	i	ـِي	ī
ـُ	u	ـُو	ū
ـّ	double letter		

*Please note that due to limitations, the transliteration is not 100% accurate in capturing *tajwīd* rules.

Please Note: The *sukūn* or *sākin* generally has two shapes, ۠ and ۡ which are both pronounced the same. For the purposes of this material, the ۠ has been used.

Symbol Usage

Throughout this work, when taking the name of any of the revered personalities in Islamic history, including Allah ﷻ, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his select family members, and religious scholars, we have employed the following Arabic symbols to show the reverence to each of them. As a part of Islamic culture, readers are requested to send the salutations upon these personalities when they read this work.

	All glory belongs to God, the Glorified and Exalted Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)
	Mighty and Majestic (is He) Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)
	Blessings of Allah be upon him and his immaculate progeny Used exclusively for Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ
	Peace be upon him Used for one honored male
	Peace be upon all of them Used for three or more honored men or women or a combination
	Peace be upon her Used for one honored female
	May Allah, the Most High, hasten his noble return Used exclusively for Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف
	May his spirit be sanctified Used for religious scholars

Preface and Introduction by Moulana Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Islamic Center

Salāmun ʿalaykum

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

ن ۚ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

"Nūn! [I swear] by the pen and what they inscribe!" [1]

All praise is for Allah ﷻ, the Lord and Nurturer of the worlds. It is an honor and pleasure to address you: dear teachers, administrators, educators, and parents. This verse of the Qurʾān demonstrates the sanctity of writing. When Allah ﷻ takes an oath by those who write and that which has been written, it clearly demonstrates the lofty status of writing and books. If we do a proper job in actualizing the potential of this medium, then Allah ﷻ guarantees us a high position. We know that Islam places a lot of emphasis on education as a whole.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ has a beautiful narration where he says:

أَوَّلُ الدِّينِ مَعْرِفَتُهُ، وَكَمَالُ مَعْرِفَتِهِ التَّصْديقُ بِهِ، وَكَمَالُ التَّصْدِيقِ بِهِ تَوْحِيدُهُ، وَكَمَالُ تَوْحِيدِهِ الاخْلاصُ لَهُ، وَكَمَالُ الاخْلاصِ لَهُ نَفْيُ الصِّفَاتِ عَنْهُ، لِشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ صِفَة أَنَّها غَيْرُ المَوْصُوفِ، وَشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ مَوْصُوف أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ الصِّفَةِ....

"The first thing in religion is the recognition of Him (Allah); and the perfection of recognizing Him is to witness Him; and the perfection of witnessing Him is to believe in His Oneness; and the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him as Pure; and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed, and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute…" [2]

Here, the Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-Muʾminīn ؑ) is demonstrating the importance of instilling systematic knowledge *(ʿilm)* and a deeper recognition and cognizance *(maʿrifah)* into our children, especially our youth. The Imām ؑ indicates that complete and perfect *maʿrifah* can only be reached by learning and grasping the true concept of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd),* and the beliefs that stem from it from a young age.

Human beings love beauty and goodness innately, and because Allah ﷻ is perfect Beauty; and Islam, the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ are the manifestations of Allah's Beauty, when we find the knowledge and deeper recognition of this beauty, we will automatically be drawn to it, and it will blossom in our hearts. Similarly, if we can achieve this for our youth, then they will automatically be drawn to it, and will be able to truly connect with their faith, and become ambassadors of Islam, the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ. It will also cultivate within them a drive and passion to fulfill their roles and responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qalam (68), Verse 1.
2 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 1.

It goes without saying of course, that this knowledge must be from the correct sources, comprehensive in nature, and have topics that are relevant for the guidance of our youth—particularly for issues and challenges that they face on a daily basis. The knowledge that our youth acquire should be foundational and a precursor to improve, learn further, and build a love for Islam and the Qurʾān within themselves.

After delving further, we find that this education can be obtained in two formats: informal and formal. Informal education entails formats such as speeches, classes, discussions, and a teacher's interactions within a classroom. Formal education refers to the standards and guidelines that teachers follow when teaching, commonly referred to as the curriculum. While both forms of education are integral to the learning process, a cohesive curriculum is crucial in ensuring that the deliverance of education is done so in an organized and logical sequence.

Additionally, as we know, Islam is a **complete** way of life. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"Say: 'Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, Lord (and Nurturer) of the worlds.'" [3]

In an ideal world, our education system would be all-encompassing. However, this is difficult to implement due to various limitations and circumstances. For example, even full-time Islamic schools generally only allocate a few hours a week for Islamic studies. Similarly, weekend schools only operate for a few hours once a week, at most for about 30-34 weeks during the year. Therefore, weekend schools and full-time Islamic schools overall do not have the capacity to adopt a completely integrated system for our children to learn Islam in conjunction with other necessary subjects. As a result, most schools focus on these five Islamic subjects: Qurʾān, *ʿAqāʾid* (Beliefs), *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), History, and *Akhlāq* (Morals and Etiquettes). It is with this in mind that we are honored to compile and develop a Pre-K to Grade 12 Curriculum for Islamic Studies and Qurʾān, as well as for life skills and contemporary issues related to our daily lives.

Alḥamdulillāh, Al-Kisa Foundation is pleased to present the Islamic Studies Curriculum, which focuses on four core subjects: *ʿAqāʾid*, *Fiqh*, History, and *Akhlāq*. Inshāʾallāh, we hope to further develop the fifth core subject, Qurʾān, in areas such as *Tajwīd* (rules related to recitation), *Mafāhīm* (understanding), and *Tafsīr* (commentary and deeper understanding). The journey to create this Curriculum started over 20 years ago, but the true emphasis and efforts were over the last 6 years where we piloted the lessons, and got feedback from the community. At this time, the Pre-K to Grade 6 Curriculum has undergone many iterations and revisions to the extent that it has reached a satisfactory level.

Alḥamdulillāh, the Grade 7-12 Curriculum has reached some great milestones with your *duʿās*. Having been piloted for a few years to test the content, incorporate feedback, many editings, etc., with the blessings of Allah ﷻ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, it is now being printed professionally. This Curriculum is a compilation of different resources, both existing and new, based on input from various individuals and institutions. As a result, some of the books or lessons are quite large, and it is at the discretion of the teacher to skip certain lessons if need be, since extra material was added as additional resources. Although we had initially created a scope and sequence, and planned to fully develop the lessons ourselves, we ran into some unforeseen hurdles with the COVID-19 Pandemic, but have been able to overcome those by the blessings of the Almighty.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 162.

A more detailed overview on how this Curriculum was developed is outlined below.

METHODS USED TO COMPILE THIS CURRICULUM

1. As with all projects under Al-Kisa Foundation, the curriculum was guided by scholars, educators, and the Kisa mission team.

2. Several resources were used in collaboration with other developers, including, but not limited to, madrasah.net, the Kawther Learning Center Team, the Islamic Syllabus Team, the Sirat Curriculum Team, as well as books of great scholars like Shahīd Motahhari, Āyatullāh Ja'far Sobhani, etc.

3. The first step was identifying the challenges faced by youth and creating a scope and sequence of this information by organizing it into five categories: ʿaqāʾid, fiqh, history, akhlāq, and contemporary issues. After this, we designed 64 lessons in order to fit the average Sunday school schedule, also bearing in mind that the material could be expanded further for a full-time school.

4. Next, each lesson was given guiding points by myself or other scholars to guide the outcome and method of each lesson.

5. Each lesson was then written by an educator, reviewed once again by a scholar to verify the content, and finally given back to an educator to create worksheets, etc.

6. This would finalize the content portion of the lesson, after which the graphics team would create the layout and graphics for each.

7. Of course, this was a monumental task with many individuals involved, all of which was tracked using a project management software.

Once the final review was done by myself, the curriculum, along with supporting slides, activities, and games, was published online on our Salam Online website (www.salamonline.education) for the benefit of others. I am humbled to be a part of this process, and am very aware that despite our best efforts, there is lots of room for improvement. I humbly ask all of the parents, educators, students, school administrators, and others who utilize this curriculum to please bless us with your constructive feedback, criticism, suggestions, and comments. After all, only the Qurʾān is free from all defects and mistakes!

Additionally, please do consider sharing your resources with us so that we can possibly incorporate them into the curriculum and enhance it inshāʾAllāh. We are interested in any teaching methodologies, supplemental curriculum, or additional resources used. Digital resources, such as presentations, games, and quizzes, are also appreciated and can be shared with **admin@alkisafoundation.org**. Jazākallāhu khayran!

We hope that you and your children enjoy this Curriculum, and that it is beneficial to the community at large, inshāʾAllāh. Please do remember us in your *duʿās,* and provide us with any feedback so that we can make future improvements. We look forward to hearing from you.

We pray to Allah ﷻ to give us the strength and the Divine providence and ability *(tawfīq)* to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With Duʿās,
Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

About the Board ʿĀlim

Moulana Nabi R. Mir (Abidi) is a scholar, an educator, a father, and an enthusiast for creating educational infrastructure and Islamic resources for the benefit of the global community. He is a pioneer of always thinking "outside of the box" by supporting the creation of innovative materials to engage young readers to pick up Islamic books, interact with Qurʾānic games, learn from the Steps to Perfection Curriculum, and begin their life-long journey of holistic education.

Being a dedicated student and graduate of *Darse Khārij* from the *Ḥawzah* (the highest level of Islamic Studies in the seminary), Moulana Abidi understands the intrinsic value of Islamic education. Also, having grown up in India, and now residing in the United States, he has had the honor of traveling to various communities and meeting many community leaders. He values the importance of collaboration and working together to optimize our communal potential and create open source platforms so that information and resources are available and accessible to everyone around the world.

You, dear reader, are now part of the Al-Kisa family.
Share the word, and join the mission.

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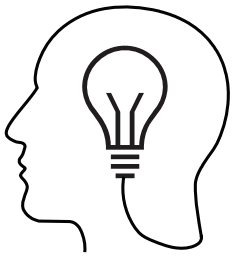

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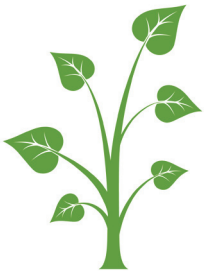

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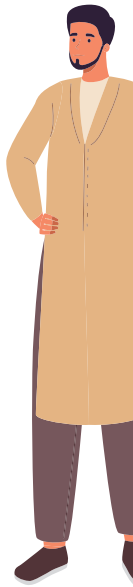

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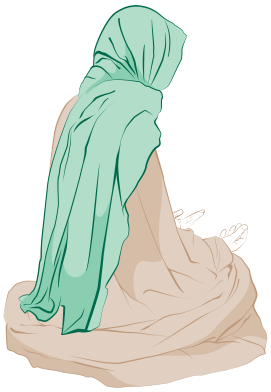

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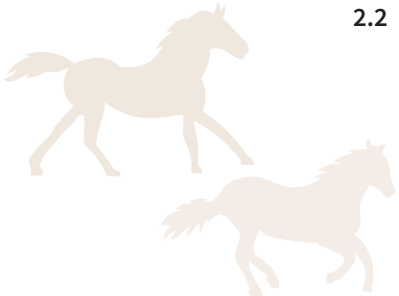

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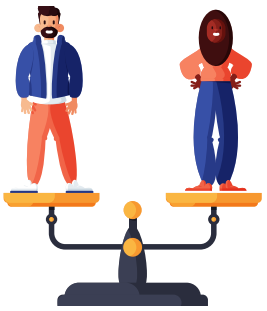

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ʿAQĀʾID
(BELIEFS)

CHAPTER 1

Allah ﷻ and His Blessings

1.1 The Existence of God

1.2 Attributes of Allah ﷻ

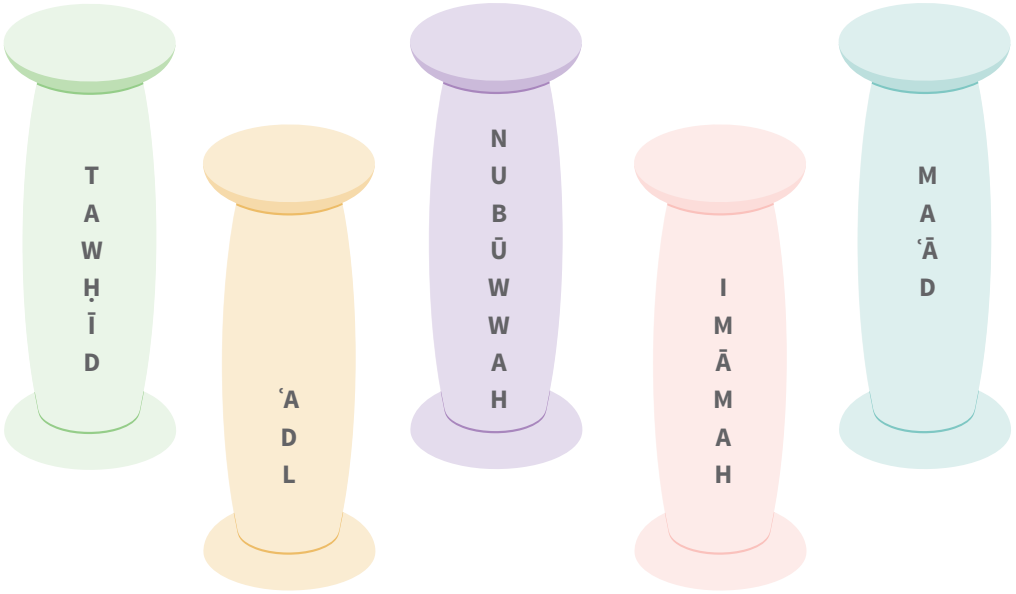
1.3 Gratefulness toward Allah ﷻ

1.1 The Existence of God

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Recognize one's innate awareness of God Almighty.
- Provide reasoning for Allah's existence.
- Analyze the order in the entire universe, and connect it to the One God.



REVIEWING THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The five fundamental beliefs, pillars, or roots of faith in Islam are referred to in Arabic as *Uṣūl ad-Dīn*, and these include:

1. The Oneness of Allah ﷻ and how He is Unique, with no equal whatsoever: *Tawḥīd*
2. Allah ﷻ is Just: *ʿAdl*
3. Allah ﷻ sent 124,000 Prophets ﷺ to guide humanity: *Nubuwwah*
4. Allah ﷻ sent 12 Imāms ﷺ after the final Prophet ﷺ to guide humanity, and they continued the message of the Prophets ﷺ: *Imāmah*
5. The Hereafter, and the concept how after everyone dies, they will be brought back to life to face the consequences of all of their actions: *Maʿād*

We will begin our lessons on Islamic Beliefs *(ʿAqāʾid)* by discussing the Unity of Allah ﷻ, and some of His Attributes.

INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE OF ALLAH ﷻ

Deep in our existence, we have an awareness—an intuitive knowledge of Allah ﷻ, the Creator and Nurturer. Unfortunately, due to things like being preoccupied with sins or vices, we can become oblivious of this awareness. However, during times of distress or desperation, this innate awareness resurfaces.

Have you experienced the desire to talk to Allah ﷻ more when you are faced with problems in life? This is because we are instinctively 'programmed' to turn toward Him, similar to a baby who finds rest only with one's mother.

The Noble Qur'ān uses the example of people on a ship who are stranded in the middle of the ocean and are faced by huge waves. They all instinctively turn toward Allah ﷻ and beg Him to rescue them. However, when Allah ﷻ then saves them, only a minority of them remain true to their promises to Allah ﷻ, while others again become oblivious of Him.

"And when a wave like mountain covers them, they call upon Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience. But when He brings them (safely) to the land, (only) some of them follow the middle course." [1]

STOP AND REFLECT: Do you remember a difficult experience or moment in life when you were really struggling, and you instinctively turned to Allah ﷻ? Take a few minutes to reflect on this, and try to remember how you felt at that time.

Even though we are programmed to know Allah ﷻ, it is due to our lack of connection with much of our intuitive knowledge, our sins, and our love for this world that our awareness can become fuzzy and uncertain. We enter into a state of *ghaflah*, or heedlessness, and become negligent about what we already know to be true. This is where we should turn to the power of our mind and examine logical arguments that establish the existence of Allah ﷻ for ourselves, and then to help others.

In this lesson, we will examine some of these arguments. However, we should remember that just learning about the truth is not enough to reach it. We must also act upon it by staying away from sins, and doing our obligations in order to preserve and strengthen our connection with Allah ﷻ.

1. THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT (DESIGN AND ORDER)

The world we live in is full of order. Consider the amazing network of neurons in our brain that control all our bodily functions such as eating, sleeping, fighting harmful bacteria and viruses, and so on. This system is so complex that it is impossible for scientists to create anything as complex as the human brain in any machine. The human brain is able to perform more functions simultaneously than any computer.

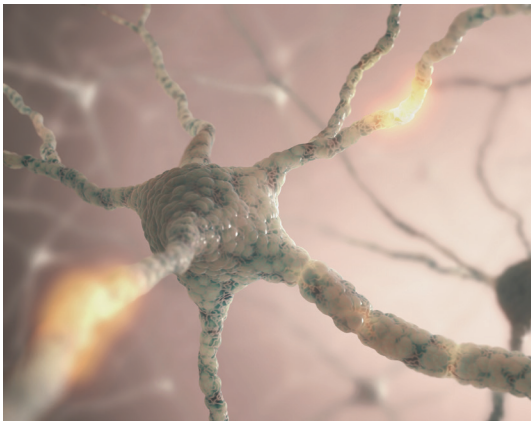


Figure 1: The circuitry of our brains!

Another example of order and design is the way the planets are aligned around the sun, and the way the Earth is positioned in relation to the sun. Consider the gradual change of day and night. At dawn, light gradually pierces the curtains of darkness; and at night, light stealthily withers away providing darkness. Can you imagine how difficult it would have been to wake up at a time when the sky is totally black, then immediately looking up to see the sky as bright as midday?

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 32.

Figure 2: Night enveloping day

This gradual change can only occur because of the precise rotation of the Earth along its axis—in the most perfect and calculated way—so that we feel the least possible discomfort.

There are numerous examples that go beyond the scope of this lesson. The possibility of such perfect order and intelligent law in every single thing coming about by chance is so minuscule that any rational person would dismiss it. The chance of an ape accidently typing a masterpiece when put in front of a typewriter is much greater than the chance that this entire universe—with all the order witnessed in it—came about randomly. A rational person would easily accept the fact that such perfect order is only possible if the one who put it in place is a Wise and Intelligent Being. This Wise and Intelligent Creator is none other than Almighty Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is another example of perfect order in the world around us? What do all the examples provided, including your own, have in common?

THE FINE-TUNING OF THE UNIVERSE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE76nwimuT0&t=5s

FINE-TUNING OF THE UNIVERSE

The video in the sidebar discusses some examples of 'fine-tuning' in the universe: the exact precision with which things in the universe have been designed in order to support life. These are all indicators of the presence of an Intelligent Creator and Designer.

STRENGTHENING OUR FAITH THROUGH THIS PROOF

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: "The best worship is continuously contemplating about Allah and His Power." [2]

The Imāms ﷺ have also indicated that contemplating for an hour is better than worshiping for a year.[3] This is because it leads to one of the higher forms of worship which is the continuous remembrance of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ states in the Noble Qurʾān:

...وَلَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ أَكْبَرُ...

"...and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest..." [4]

Wondering about Allah's creation is one of the ways we can remember Him, and discover His Attributes. When we see the amazing beauty and precision in nature, it speaks to us about Allah's Wisdom, Beauty, Mercy, Knowledge, and Power. This brings us closer to Him and increases our faith in Him.

2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 55.
3 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 11, P. 183.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 45.

Activity 1.1a: Video Reflection

We will watch some videos (linked in the sidebar) which explain some of the amazing examples of perfect design in the universe. Contemplating these examples of design leads us to know that there is a Wise Being who created and manages this entire world. The creatures shown in these videos display certain types of unique intelligence and/or abilities.

While watching these videos, consider the two questions below, and write some brief answers to them as you watch:

1. How do these abilities help these animals survive or reach their purpose?

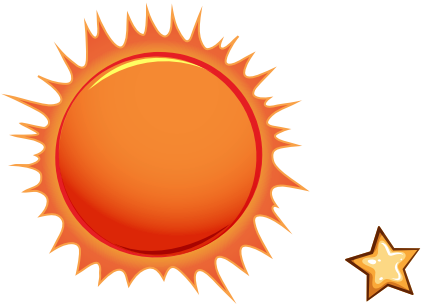
2. What do these abilities tell us about the Creator of these creatures?

DRONGO BIRD TRICKS MEERKATS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEYCjJqr21A

FLYING DRAGONS OF THE JUNGLE
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBVgbxTkEuo

INCREDIBLE TEAMWORK FROM LITTLE CLOWNFISH
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWlDa7CA_5w

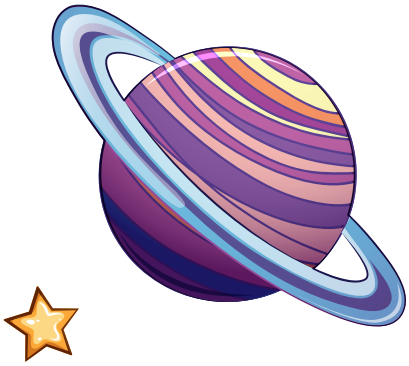
THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT



Regarding Allah ﷻ being the Creator of everything, the Noble Qurʾān says:

"Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? No, they do not have certainty [in what they believe]." [5]

According to one interpretation, these verses ask us to ponder about the nature of our own existence. Did we just come to be? Or do we have a Creator?



The cosmological argument is a famous logical argument that has been presented in history and provides a response to these questions. You will inshāʾAllāh learn more about this argument in future years, but for this year, we will go through the basic explanation by first presenting an observation, and then drawing a conclusion.

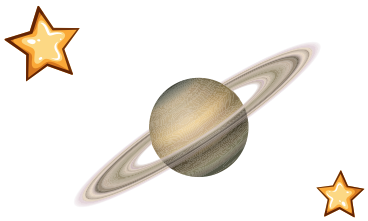
OBSERVING THE WORLD AROUND US

We know through simple observations that everything in this material world of ours depends on other things for its existence. For instance, as human beings, we need food, water, and air to survive—all of which depend on diversely interconnected ecosystems for their existence.

We also know that all the natural phenomena are interrelated and depend on one another. This is why even a 1 degree Celsius rise in the average temperature on Earth would lead to intense changes all across the globe, such as: the melting of glaciers, sea levels rising, extreme weather fluctuations, change in rain patterns, oceans becoming warmer and more acidic, and many species of plants and animals would face extinction.[6]

Due to the fact that all material and natural things need other things to exist, this means that they do not have an independent existence. They may or may not exist, depending on the conditions. In philosophy, this is called 'Contingency' which means neediness and dependency.

The first part of this Cosmological Argument is to realize that everything in the universe has been created and is contingent. This means that the universe itself, as a whole, is also contingent. This is because if all the parts of something share a characteristic, so does the whole. For example, if all the drops of water in the ocean are liquid, then the ocean itself will also be liquid and cannot be a solid or a gas. In this way, every part of the universe being contingent means that the universe as a whole, is also contingent.



5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah aṭ-Ṭūr (52), Verses 35-36.

6 NASA. (2019, June 19). *A degree of concern: Why global temperatures matter - Climate Change: Vital signs of the planet.* NASA. Retrieved December 26, 2022, from https://climate.nasa.gov/news/2878/a-degree-of-concern-why-global-temperatures-matter/?p

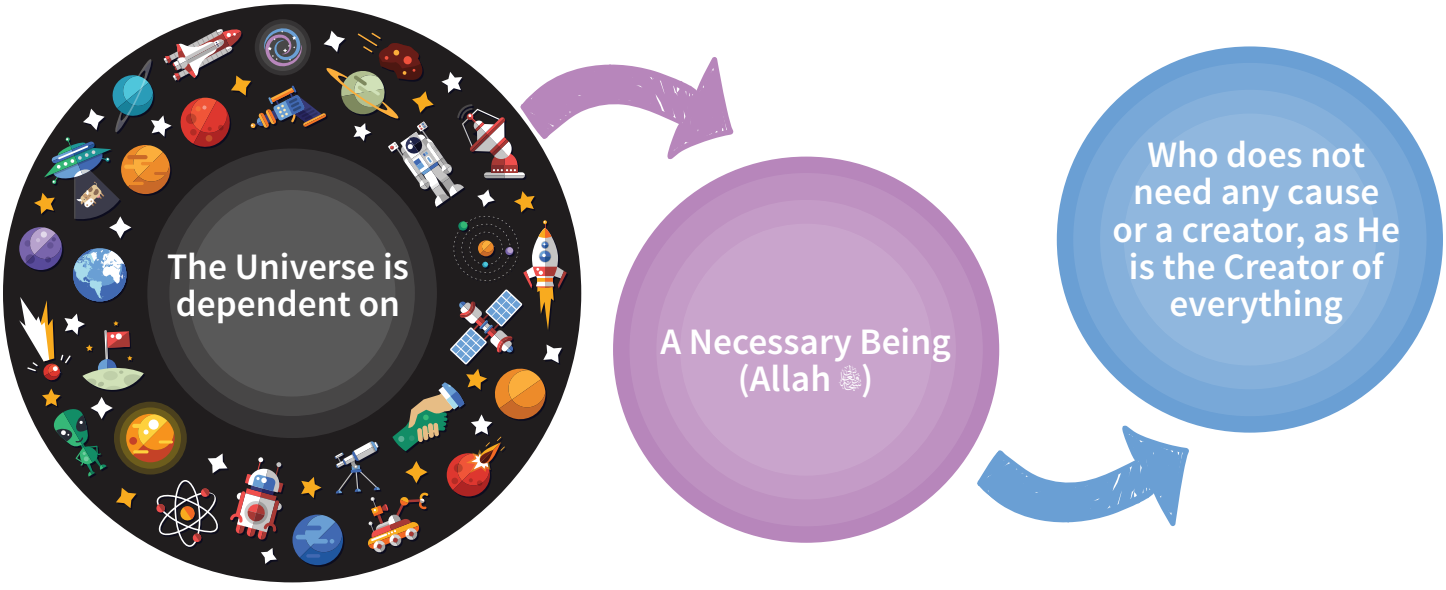
THE UNIVERSE NEEDS A CAUSE THAT CREATED IT

The conclusion of the section above is that the world around us is dependent/contingent. It needs other things in order to exist. This means that it could not have always existed (because it cannot exist by itself), and there is no guarantee that it will keep on existing (if that thing it is dependent on ceases to allow it to exist). So, one may ask: How did it come into existence?

Logically, the physical universe needs a cause in order to bring it into existence. This cause cannot itself be contingent otherwise it too would need a cause to bring it into existence, and this would then need another cause, and so on to infinity! That means that contingent things cannot be the ultimate cause of the universe. Accidental phenomena (such as the theorised "big bang") also cannot be the cause of the universe because such accidental phenomena also consist of contingent parts, which are in need of a cause.

The universe also could not have created itself, because if the universe created itself, then it means that it would have had to exist before it came into existence, and this is logically impossible.

This can only mean that the cause of the universe must be a Being who is not contingent, nor dependent on anything at all. The opposite of a contingent, or needy being is a needless Being who must have always existed, and can never not exist. This Being is 'greater than the universe itself' and not contained by it. This Being is Allah ﷻ, the Creator of every single thing in existence.


The Universe is dependent on
A Necessary Being (Allah ﷻ)
Who does not need any cause or a creator, as He is the Creator of everything

THE QUESTION OF "WHO CREATED GOD?"

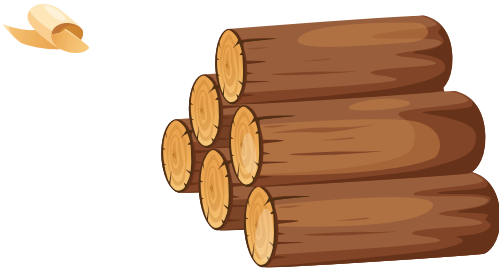
This is a question that is often posed by atheists. Once we understand the Cosmological Argument above, we can deal with this question fairly easily. We have just discussed that everything that has been created possesses the following properties and is contingent:

1. They are all limited. For example, a table will only occupy a certain area of a room.
2. They are all subject to change. Over time, a table will begin to deteriorate, break down, and eventually cease to exist as we know it.
3. They are in need. A table is in need of wood in order for it to be made; the wood in turn comes from trees which depend on sun and water.

Human beings also have the same properties in terms of being limited. For instance, it is impossible for a person to be physically present in two places at the exact same time. As well, humans are subject to change i.e., from birth to youth, then to old age, and eventually death. They are also in need of many things, such as sunshine for warmth, air to breathe, rain for water, etc.

On the other hand, Allah ﷻ, the Being who caused the entire universe to exist, goes beyond these limitations, and is needless of everything. He does not undergo any deterioration, nor is not limited by anything. This is Almighty Allah ﷻ, the Necessary Being for everything in existence.

In part of his response to a question posed by a man about how Allah ﷻ came to being, Imām ʿAlī ؑ replied: *"…..He exists without coming into being; He is before 'before' itself, before any limits. Limits do not apply to Him for He is the ultimate limit of all limits!"*[7]



STOP AND REFLECT: In your own words, what does the above narration mean to you? What does it mean that "...He is before 'before' itself…?"

Since Allah ﷻ is a Necessary Being, and is not limited, nor is He needy toward anyone or anything, He is not in need of any cause. Therefore, the very question 'Who created God?' does not apply because God is not created. The Necessary Being, by definition, does not need a cause or a creator.

7 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, P. 716, Ḥadīth # 4126.

Activity 1.1b: Review Questions

1. The Cosmological proof for the existence of God is based on the premise that:
   a. The universe is contingent (needs a cause to bring it into existence).
   b. Every effect must have a cause.
   c. The cause of the universe is the universe itself.

2. The proof of order for the existence of God is based on the principle that:
   a. If there is order, there must be a Wise Creator behind it.
   b. Order can come about by chance, according to the law of probability.
   c. There is no exact order in our world.

3. Everything that has been created possesses the following qualities:
   a. They are limited.
   b. They are subject to change.
   c. They are in need.
   d. All of the above.

4. Using logic to establish the existence of God can be useful in order to:
   a. Respond to doubts that people who deny God's existence present.
   b. Restore our connection with our intuitive knowledge that has become weakened due to various factors.
   c. Understand the complexity of God's existence.
   d. a & b

5. The question of who created God is nonsensical because the Necessary Being does not need a _____ or a _____.

6. The amazing network of neurons in our brain is one proof as to why an All-Wise Creator must exist. Is the above statement true or false? Explain why.

Activity 1.1b: Review Questions (Continued)

7. Your little brother or sister asks you how you know Allah ﷻ exists. How do you explain the concept to them, using examples in the world around us?

8. **Making Inferences:** We have learned that human beings have an intuitive awareness of Allah ﷻ; however, our sins and vices can make us oblivious to this knowledge. Is it possible for any creation not to be oblivious of this? Can you think of any examples?

9. **Outdoor Activity:** Take a walk or hike outside! Ask your family/friends to join you if they can. Leave your phone and all electronic devices at home.

   What did you feel? What did you observe? Do you feel more connected with Allah ﷻ? How so? Journal your thoughts and reflections in the space below:

Activity 1.1c: Create a Dialogue

How would you convince your atheist friend about the existence of God?

With your partner or group, work to create a dialogue with an atheist friend explaining the existence of God. Your dialogue can be presented through a PowerPoint, a skit, a video, or any other teacher-approved creative outlet. Use the rubric below to guide your work.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Dialogue Etiquette	Students struggled to maintain respectful language during the dialogue.	Student language was not entirely appropriate for a respectful dialogue.	Student language was somewhat respectful, but left room for improvement.	Students were able to maintain respectful language and body language during the dialogue.
Information	Majority of the information presented was not accurate and was without proper evidence.	Some of the information presented in the dialogue was accurate, evidence-based, and thorough.	Most of the information presented in the dialogue was accurate, evidence-based, and thorough.	All information presented was accurate, evidence-based, and thorough.
Understanding of Topic	Students did not demonstrate an understanding of the topic through clear examples and explanations. Less than 3 examples were used.	Students' work left the audience with multiple questions, and did not present sufficient examples. Less than 3 examples were used.	Students demonstrated an adequate understanding of the topic, but explanations could have been clearer. 3 examples were presented.	Students demonstrated a strong understanding of the topic through precise explanations and examples. 4-5 examples were presented.
Organization and Clarity	Arguments were not presented clearly, or in a logical order.	A few arguments were presented somewhat clearly, but left many questions unanswered.	Most arguments were presented clearly, and in an organized fashion.	All arguments were presented clearly, and in an organized fashion.
Presentation Style	Students were not able to capture the attention of the audience through their presentation style.	Students' use of gestures and eye contact did not aid in keeping the attention of the audience.	Students sometimes used gestures, appropriate eye contact, and tone of voice to keep the attention of the audience.	Students maintained eye contact, used gestures, and an appropriate tone of voice to capture the attention of the audience.

1.2 Attributes of Allah ﷻ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand that Allah ﷻ is Unlimited, and not bound by space, time, or shape.
- Understand that Allah ﷻ is Perfect, and through His Names and Attributes, we can get to know Him better.
- Identify the limited role that our senses and intellect play in understanding Allah's Essence.
- Recognize and explain what Allah's Uniqueness means.
- Elaborate on Allah's Attribute of Lordship and Nurturing.

The previous lesson presented some verses from the Noble Qurʾān, and provided logical arguments that Allah ﷻ exists, and that He is the Creator (or the Cause) of the entire universe. In this lesson, we will learn about Allah's Attributes in general, and about three of His specific Attributes: His Unlimitedness, His Uniqueness, and His Nurturing Lordship.

ALLAH ﷻ IS UNLIMITED

In the Noble Qurʾān, we read the following phrases:

> "Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One and the Ever-Dominating." [1]
>
> "He is the First and the Last…" [2]
>
> "And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth; and Allah encompasses all things." [3]

In the previous lesson, we learned that every created entity in this universe is in need of other entities in order to survive. We also learned that the universe has intricate, yet perfect harmony and design. There must be a Being who is beyond the physical universe, but is responsible for creating and designing it all.

The first verse above teaches us that Allah ﷻ is the Creator of everything. He is only One meaning that there can never be a second, or a third, and He is not limited by any boundaries. He is also *al-Qahhār*, or Ever-Dominating.

The second verse teaches us that the beginning for anything that can be imagined, or the end of anything that can be imagined, Allah ﷻ is before it and after it. He existed before everything, and will continue to exist after everything.

The third verse teaches us that every single thing belongs to Allah ﷻ, and everything is encompassed by Him.

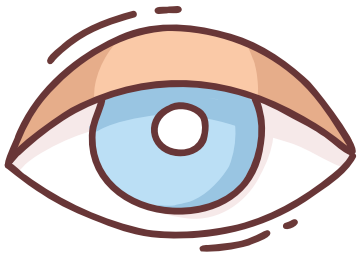
From all of these verses and many other ones, and through logical reasoning, we can understand that Allah ﷻ is Unlimited. Unlike ourselves and everything around us, He cannot be limited by anything at all such as space, time, shape, etc.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verse 16.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57), Verse 3.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 126.

When Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ was asked by an atheist to define the extent of Allah ﷻ, the Imām ﷺ said: *"There is no limit to Allah."*

The man asked: *"Why not?"*

The Imām ﷺ replied: *"If He was limited, then it would have been possible for there to be something added to Him; and if it was possible for something to be added to Him, then it would have possible for something to be taken away from Him as well."* [4]



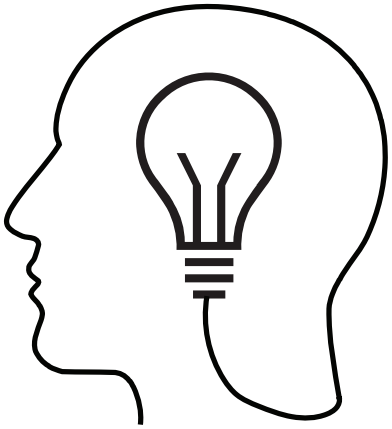
However, nothing can be taken away from Allah ﷻ because that would mean He would be like His creations, and dependent on someone else to give Him what He requires. The previous lesson demonstrated that Allah ﷻ is independent and completely needless of anyone.

KNOWING ALLAH ﷻ

How do we come to know about the things around us? Usually we make use of our senses, such as our sight and hearing. However, our senses are limited even when it comes to material things in this universe. For example, even on the most perfect day, with a flat land, the range of our vision is limited. Eagles can see 4-5 times further than human beings. Humans can detect sounds in a frequency range from about 20 Hz to 20 kHz, but we cannot hear lower frequency sounds that, for example, elephants make, or higher frequency sounds that bats produce.

Are our senses then capable of helping us perceive Allah ﷻ? If our senses are limited even in perceiving physical things, then they are even more restricted when it comes to perceiving a Being who is not confined to space, time, or shape. Our senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell can never perceive His Essence. They can, however, see the infinite signs of Allah ﷻ that He has put in His creations, and thereby be an incredible means of helping us get to know Him better. However, they can never perceive Allah ﷻ directly. The Qurʾān states:

> "The sights do not perceive Him, but He perceives all sights, and He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware." [5]



A similar limitation exists in our intellect and power to understand or imagine all concepts. There are many physical phenomena—especially those related to time and space—that our intellect struggles to grasp, and that scientists still do not fully understand. If our intellect is limited in understanding these physical concepts, then it is even more limited in understanding or perceiving a Being who is beyond this physical universe.

4 Shaykh Ṭabarsī, *Al-Iḥtijāj*, Vol. 2, P. 396.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 103.

ALLAH ﷻ HAS PERFECT NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES

We have already established that we cannot perceive Allah ﷻ with our senses, nor understand His Essence with our intellect. So how can we come to know Him? Through knowing the Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

We have two ways of knowing these:

- When we reflect on His creations using our senses and intellect, then we can see some of His Attributes such as His Mercy, Wisdom, and Power.
- He alerts us to some of these Attributes in the Noble Qur'ān and the *aḥādīth*.

STOP AND REFLECT: We all know that Allah describes Himself with titles such as *"ar-Raḥmān"* (the All-Compassionate) and *"ar-Raḥīm"* (the All-Merciful). What are some other titles, or Names of Allah ﷻ that you know of?

"Allah—there is no deity except Him—to Him belong the Best [and most Perfect and Beautiful] Names." [6]

In this verse, Allah ﷻ invites us to reflect upon His Names, which point us to His Attributes. He also tells us that He possesses the Best and most Beautiful Names, because He is the most Perfect Being.

One of the great descriptions of Allah ﷻ and His Names in the Noble Qur'ān can be found in Āyatul Kursī. Here is one part of this description:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ۚ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

"Allah—there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting. Neither slumber, nor sleep overtake Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth." [7]

Whether it be Allah's Mercy, Power, Ever-Living Existence, Nurturing, Ownership, etc., we should remember that each of His Attributes are perfect and unlimited in the way that He is perfect and unlimited. So, for example, when Allah ﷻ says that He owns everything that is in the heavens and the earth, it means that He is the **only** real Owner of everything. We sometimes think of ourselves as owners because we have possession of certain things, such as a pen, a bike, a car, or a house. But the real reason why we "own" these things is because Allah ﷻ has lent them to us temporarily. He can take them away from us in an instant during our lives, and when we die, we will part company from them!

When Allah ﷻ says that He is the Living *(al-Ḥayy)*, it means He is the **only** true Ever-Living Being. Other creatures are alive at some point or another, but not alive at other times; but Allah is Eternally Living.

Even when we think about the Attributes of Allah ﷻ to help us understand Him in our own limited way, the reality of these Attributes is above and beyond anything we can imagine.

6 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verse 8.

7 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 255.

ALLAH ﷻ IS UNIQUE

From one of the verses quoted at the beginning of this lesson, we know that Allah ﷻ is One—in a way that there can never be a second or a third. We can also understand there can only be One Being who is absolutely Perfect through logic as well. Let us imagine for a moment, that there were two gods who were perfect in every way. If so, how would we be able to distinguish between them? The only way we would be able to tell them apart is if one or both of them were limited in some way, such that one lacked something that the other one had. However, this would make them imperfect and not complete, and therefore not God. Therefore, we understand that there is only One Being who is Perfect in every way, and that is Allah ﷻ. He is Unique, He has no partner or equal, and there is absolutely nothing or no one like Him.

STOP AND REFLECT: What comes to your mind when you hear the word perfect? What about when you think of Allah ﷻ? Are these two connected, and if so, then how?

ALLAH ﷻ IS THE NURTURER (AR-RABB)

One of the Names of Allah ﷻ is the Nurturer (*ar-Rabb*), which refers to His Attribute of Lordship and Nurturing. A nurturer not only creates something, but then looks after all of its affairs as well. Allah ﷻ did not just create the universe, He also looks after it to the most minutest of details. He graces everything with life, moment to moment.

Remember, we are completely contingent and dependent upon Him—not only for coming into existence, but also for our continued well-being. He is not like a builder who builds and then leaves. Rather, He continues to provide and look after all of His creations. An analogy to help us understand this better is that of a light bulb which always needs electricity to give light. If the source of initial electricity is cut off, then the light bulb will not be able to provide any more light; similarly, if the Source of all creations—Allah ﷻ—ceases to sustain something, then that will no longer be able to exist.

Some aspects of Allah ﷻ being the Nurturer (*ar-Rabb*) are that He is:

- **All-Knowledgeable:** He knows what all creations need at all times and in all situations.
- **All-Powerful:** He can give everything what they need at all times and in all circumstances.
- **All-Merciful:** He loves His creations, and will always give them what is best for them, and exactly what they need.

He is the All-Perfect *Rabb*—beyond our imagination!

Certain faiths believe that although Allah ﷻ created the world, He left some of the affairs to be run by other beings. For example:

- The Meccans at the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ believed that the idols of wood and stone had power to affect the world, so they used to pray to them.
- Hindus believe that god has three forms, and comes down to Earth in the form of avatars. They pay homage to idols as part of this belief.
- Most Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God, from the same substance of God, and that he has the power to affect the universe independently.

In Islam, all these beliefs are strongly rejected. Islam teaches that Allah ﷻ created the world and looks after it Himself. He sometimes delegates certain roles to creatures like angels, or causes things to happen through natural processes like cause and effect. However, none of these delegates or processes have any independent power—they are all **completely** dependent on Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ created this world, and knows all its details. He is All-Knowing about this universe because it was He who created and fashioned it.

He is also All-Powerful over the entire universe, and can do anything He wills with it because it is all His creations.

All other beings that people might take as 'gods' (such as idols, or nature, or a certain human) are creatures within this world. This means that if they have any knowledge at all, this knowledge is very limited; and if they have any power at all, this power is also limited. How can a creature existing within the universe have any power over the universe as a whole?

The only being that can have real power over the entire universe is the Being who is beyond the universe, and who is the very Cause of the universe. The world we live in is full of connections and systems. It was created in such a way that each part depends on another. For example, something as simple as the oxygen which we need to breathe and survive, depends on a system that includes the sea, the heat from the sun, the mountains, the rivers, the trees, and even the soil on the ground. We know that Allah ﷻ created this world with these connections and systems; and it is He who is looking after their day to day needs, because He continues to nurture them and their ongoing dependencies. It does not make sense for created beings to be completely in charge of certain parts of the world independently because all the parts are connected.

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEO

www.youtube.com/watch?v=M18HxXve3CM

The video in the sidebar demonstrates the interconnections between whales, and their impact on the climate. While watching this video, make some notes about what effects killing whales has had on the environment around them.

Activity 1.2a: Research

Research something which displays interconnectedness in the universe, such as the one demonstrated in the video above. It can be on the relationship and effects of living or non-living things.

For the interrelatedness of non-living things, how can you connect it back to something living; and to Allah ﷻ?

Present your findings to the class with a visual aid (i.e., PowerPoint presentation, Prezi, charts/graphs etc.).

Use the rubric below as a guide to ensure that your ideas are presented cohesively, regardless of the choice of the visual aid.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand, and/or had no sources.	Most of the graphics related to the topic, and most of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics related to the topic, and made it easier to understand. All of the graphics had a source cited.	All of the graphics directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes at all.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in the item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, and maintained accuracy of item description.	Content presented suited all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, and maintained accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy, and/or lacked design.	Project was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in terms of design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, and lacked quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

Activity 1.2b: Review Questions

1. When something is contingent, it means that:
   - **a.** It is not self-sustainable.
   - **b.** It is self-sustainable.
   - **c.** That it is an infinite being.

2. There can only be one perfect Being because
   - **a.** The only way to differentiate between two would create limits in both
   - **b.** Two perfect beings would not leave room for the created beings.
   - **c.** Otherwise we would not know who was first and who is last.
   - **d.** All of the above.

3. The only way that we can understand Allah's Essence is through His Attributes because
   - **a.** Our intellects are too limited.
   - **b.** We learn His Attributes through reflection.
   - **c.** We are not trying hard enough.
   - **d.** All of the above.
   - **e.** a & b

4. Your younger sibling asks you how can we know that Allah ﷻ is perfect? How might you explain this to them?

5. This lesson used the example of a lightbulb that constantly needs electricity to provide light to describe how Allah ﷻ looks after this world. What is another analogy that can help explain how Allah ﷻ takes care of His creations?

6. Explain why Allah ﷻ is the only Nurturer of the world.

1.3 Gratefulness toward Allah ﷻ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain why the blessings of Allah ﷻ are countless and immeasurable.
- Classify blessings as apparent or hidden.
- Identify what it means to be ungrateful for our blessings.

Activity 1.3a: Pre-Reading Reflection

Define what it means to be grateful. Do you consider yourself to be a grateful person? Explain.

In the first two lessons of this unit, we discussed the Existence of Allah ﷻ and His Attributes. We discussed our intuitive knowledge of Him, as well as logical proofs for His Existence. We also discussed how Allah ﷻ is Unlimited and Unique, and that He is the Nurturer *(Ar-Rabb)* of all His creations. In this lesson, we will look at one of the major practical impacts of these beliefs on our day-to-day lives: Gratefulness to Allah ﷻ.

GRATEFULNESS TO ALLAH ﷻ

The universe in general, and Earth in particular, were created in such a way so as to make it possible for human beings to live, grow, and reach their perfection in the best way possible. Everything that people need for their life is provided, and everything that Allah ﷻ, the All-Merciful, has created is essentially good and for the benefit of humankind. He says in the Noble Qurʾān:

> "Do you not see that Allah has disposed for you whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth, and He has showered upon you His blessings, (both) the outward (apparent), and the inward (hidden)?..." [1]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 20.

Having acknowledged this, one should be grateful toward Allah ﷻ, the Creator, for having granted us all these bounties and favors. Being grateful is an innate response that Allah ﷻ has instilled within our natural creation *(fiṭrah)*. We do not need to be taught what gratefulness means. However, we do need to be taught the best way to be thankful, which in Islam is expressed in the form of worship and remembrance of Allah ﷻ. We also need to be reminded about the importance of being grateful.

THE BLESSINGS OF ALLAH ﷻ ARE COUNTLESS

Gratefulness to Allah ﷻ is one of the most emphasized concepts in the Qurʾān. In almost 70 verses, this topic is addressed in various ways, such as emphasizing the importance of showing gratitude to Allah ﷻ, providing examples of those who are grateful and ungrateful, and describing the consequences that each group will face. Being grateful to Allah ﷻ is stressed so many times in the Noble Qurʾān because our very existence and everything we do is in a state of neediness toward Allah ﷻ and His countless blessings. If we acknowledge and remember this, then it will strengthen our relationship with the Almighty, and impact every decision we make. But if we forget about the source of our blessings, then we will start to feel independent, become arrogant and rebellious, and take a path away from being the servants of Allah ﷻ.

Part of being grateful to Allah ﷻ is to acknowledge that we can never fully comprehend how truly blessed we are. This is because His blessings surround us in every dimension of our lives, and we are dependent upon Him for everything at all moments. We cannot fully understand something that we are so immersed in. For example, in order for a fish to truly understand what water is and how blessed it is to be in water, it would have to spend time on land, but that is not possible because it cannot survive without water. Similarly, we cannot possibly understand how undeniably blessed we are.

Allah ﷻ states in the Qurʾān:

وَإِن تَعُدُّواْ نِعْمَةَ اللّهِ لاَ تُحْصُوهَآ إِنَّ اللّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

"And if you were to count the graces (favors) of Allah, never would you be able to count them. Indeed, Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful" [2]

This verse clearly states that we can never really count or realize the blessings of Allah ﷻ. Our only hope is that His Forgiveness and Grace will encompass us so that even if we have not been sufficiently grateful, He will still accept whatever little gratefulness we show. This also emphasizes the fact that no matter how much we express our gratitude, we always need to do more because it is never even close to being truly enough.

STOP AND REFLECT: When do you express gratitude the most? What can we do if no matter how much we express gratitude, it is not enough for all of the blessings that we have been given?

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah An-Naḥl (16), Verse 18.

Part of being grateful is to acknowledge that being thankful to Allah ﷻ for His blessings is in itself a great blessing. This idea is expressed by Imām As-Sajjād ؑ in *Munājāt ash-Shākirīn* (Whispered Prayer of the Thankful Ones) where he says:

> "So how can I achieve thanksgiving? For my thanking You requires thanksgiving. Whenever I say: 'To You belongs praise' it becomes thereby incumbent upon me to say: 'To You belongs praise!'" [3]

There may be hours, days, weeks, months, years, or even a lifetime that passes by, where a human being does not even ponder upon the Source of one's blessings. Many people leave this world thinking that they were independently responsible for their own successes. However, to acknowledge that Allah ﷻ is the Source of everything that we have been given and all of our favors is truly a great blessing.

ALLAH ﷻ IS THE TRUE AND ONLY BENEFACTOR OF ALL BLESSINGS

The world around us and the world within us is full of marvelous things. The sun, the moon, plants, trees, mines, and minerals hidden deep within the heart of the earth are all of great benefit to humankind.

Even within ourselves, we have multiple systems to keep us alive: the digestive and respiratory systems; the heart and other organs of the body; and the greatest blessing of all—the intellectual ability through which we can overcome many great difficulties. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۝

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?" [4]

These are all signs of Allah's infinite Mercy and Compassion toward His creatures—one and all.

> It is therefore our duty to appreciate and acknowledge this, thus continuing to receive the countless blessings and favors of Allah ﷻ. If we fail to show our gratitude, then we could be the cause for the loss of these blessings.

3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 91, P. 142.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (41), Verse 53.

TYPES OF BLESSINGS

In regard to the numerous blessings that Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon us, we can divide them into two main categories:

- Apparent blessings
- Hidden blessings

Both of these types of blessings are referred to in the first verse quoted above.

Apparent Blessings

These are the physical blessings that can be experienced with our five senses. Examples include our bodies, and the various systems within our bodies, such as the digestive system, respiratory systems, and our five senses; the clothes we wear; food that we eat; the house which we live in; etc.

Hidden Blessings

These are the more important blessings, but perhaps are less obvious to people. They include our mental and intellectual abilities, our emotions, and other values that we should appreciate. Within this category, we also have the power of free will which enables us to achieve a status higher than even that of the angels if used correctly.

However, if we misuse these blessings and show ungratefulness by doing so, then we will end up even worse than the animals.

Another category of hidden blessings are those things which at first seem like hardships and problems. This may include difficult situations in our personal, academic, or social lives. For example, exams can be very stressful and difficult. However, the results and consequences of it are that it makes you much more confident in what you know, and through your exams you learn to apply your knowledge. Furthermore, with good results you can progress better in life and become stronger.

The most important blessing of all, is the blessing of guidance in the form of religion. This includes the Divine Books and Prophets ﷺ sent to humankind. Muslims—in accepting the Qurʾān and the Prophethood of the final Messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ—use more of this crucial blessing than others; and Shīʿahs—in accepting the position of the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—use this blessing more than other Muslims. Hence, the Shīʿahs should express even more gratitude due to the blessings that Allah ﷻ has given them.

HOW TO BE GRATEFUL TO ALLAH ﷻ

True gratitude to Allah ﷻ is only obtained when a person uses the blessings that He has provided in the way He has prescribed for them to be used. As well, one should be content with whatever He has given them.

Each blessing has a purpose and a function, and it is the responsibility of every person to use the blessings in line with their purpose and function. Only then have we fulfilled the gratitude for that bounty—which in turn will allow us to derive the full pleasures of it, and achieve the maximum benefits of that blessing. We can do this by following the instructions that Allah ﷻ has sent to us through the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

Imām ʻAlī ﷺ said: *"Being grateful for Allah's blessings is to not commit Divinely forbidden acts."* [5]

It would not be right for us to misuse a blessing that Allah ﷻ has given to us and then offer thanks, as that would defeat the sense of gratitude, and is in fact a sign of ungratefulness. For example, if your parents buy you a device to facilitate memorizing the Qurʾān, but then you use that device to listen to forbidden *(ḥarām)* music, you have been ungrateful for that gift, and your parents will not be pleased with you.

Asides from the above form of practical gratitude—which is the best form—there are many other ways in which we can express our gratitude to Allah ﷻ for His abundant blessings, some of which include:

- To thank Him verbally by saying *'alḥamdulillāh.'*
- To prostrate (go into *sujūd)* and utter verbal thanks for the blessing that we have been given, even if it is in our own words in our own language.
- To realize in our heart that Allah ﷻ is showering us with blessings that we have done nothing to deserve.
- It is also very important to thank the one whom the blessing came through (for example, the person who helped us, or the one who facilitated the good for us).
- Sometimes when we see others suffering a tribulation or difficulty, this should help us realize that Allah ﷻ has blessed us by not testing us with that kind of hardship, and we should express our gratitude to Him during those times.[6]

5 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 68, P. 42.
6 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2.
7 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 96.

Imām Aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"A person who whole-heartedly realizes a God-given blessing has expressed due thanks."* [7]

Whole-hearted realization can only come when we spend some time and thought in acknowledging the blessings and goodness we have all around us and within us—from the basic things to those things that one would count as bonuses which many other people have been deprived of.

Activity 1.3b: Reflection

Take a moment to think about all your blessings, and praise Allah ﷻ by saying *alḥamdulillāh*. What are two apparent blessings and two hidden blessings that you have been blessed with? (Do not use the ones mentioned above). In regard to the two hidden blessings you have received from Allah ﷻ, how might your life be different without these specific blessings?

Apparent Blessings

_____

_____

_____

_____

Hidden Blessings

_____

_____

_____

_____

A STORY TO REFLECT UPON

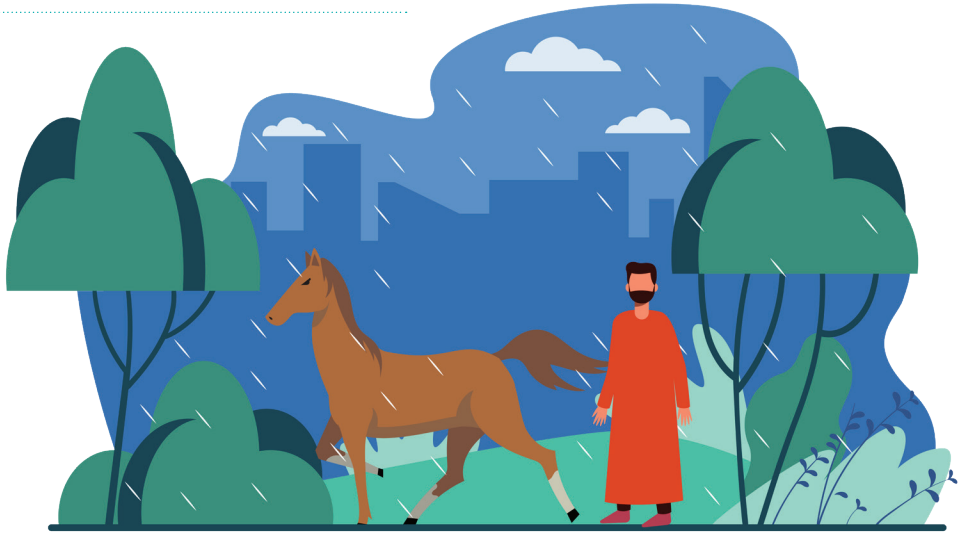
Once a wealthy merchant was returning home after selling his goods in the city. He had a large sum of money with him and had a long way to go in order to get back home. It was getting dark, so he made his horse go quicker. However, he had barely covered any distance when he got caught in a bad rainstorm. The wind blew at a fierce speed and the rain fell in torrent. He stopped his horse under a tree by the road and waited for the storm to stop. He cursed the rain as it caused a major delay in his journey.

An hour or so later, the rain stopped and the merchant was able to continue on his journey. A little distance later, he discovered that his path was blocked by a fallen tree. He reined in his horse, and suddenly a bandit appeared from behind the tree. Pistol in hand, the bandit said: "Jump down from your horse, and give me both your money and your horse!" The merchant jumped down before the robber could move a finger, took hold of him by the throat, and sent him flying with a powerful blow. The robber came to his feet and attempted to pull the trigger of his pistol, but it did not fire. He tried again and still nothing happened. The powder inside of the gun had become wet from the rain. The bandit cursed the rain as he got up on his feet and ran away quickly. At this moment, the merchant realized that the rain was actually a great blessing for him.

Sometimes, Allah ﷻ sends difficulties that are actually reminders and opportunities for us to reconnect with Him, and remember the source of all our blessings. How many times do we miss or neglect Allah's blessings because they are not packaged as we expect them to be? Or because of our short-sightedness, we do not realize the hidden reasons behind His actions.

We should always be grateful for everything we receive, and whatever trials or tribulations Allah ﷻ sends our way. Although at first glance, it may not be at all what we want, but there is something in it beyond that which meets the eye. Never judge a blessing too quickly, or just by its apparent.

STOP AND REFLECT: Can you think of a time that something you really wanted did not come to you as you expected or always anticipated? How did you react?



THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING UNGRATEFUL

Imām Aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Allah, the Almighty, granted a group of people some blessings, but they did not give thanks, so it became a burden for them; and Allah brought a calamity upon some people, but they persevered, thus, they received blessings due to their perseverance."* [8]

A person who does not give thanks to Allah ﷻ for all of His bounties is like one who does not even acknowledge the giver. The one who does not acknowledge the giver is like a person who has disbelieved in the existence of the giver.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ ۖ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ۝

"And when your Lord declared: 'If you are grateful [to Me], then I will most certainly increase (My favors) unto you; but if you are ungrateful, then verily, My chastisement will be severe indeed!'" [9]

In the Noble Qurʾān, the opposite of being grateful—*shakara* شَكَرَ—is defined by the term—*kafara* كَفَرَ—which literally means 'to cover.' This term is used for those who do not acknowledge the blessings of Allah ﷻ, and thus are ungrateful toward Him. This indicates that ungratefulness is a characteristic of the disbelievers. Ungratefulness is a path toward disbelief, the deprivation of Allah's ﷻ mercy, and the earning of Allah's ﷻ punishment. Not having gratitude leads to arrogance, rebelliousness, and departure from the path of Allah's ﷻ obedience. In this verse, Allah ﷻ warns us about His chastisement, and reminds us that being grateful (in our actions, our tongues, and our heart) is for our own best interest, and is a way of staying away from the path that leads to His chastisement.

CONCLUSION

We should live our lives in a state of constant gratefulness to Allah ﷻ for all the countless blessings that He has given us. This must 'color' all of our actions and decisions, and our heart should always be filled with a sense of acknowledgment that everything we have is from Allah ﷻ.

8 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 75, P. 241.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 7.

Activity 1.3c: Review Questions

1. Which of the following is the **best** form of showing gratefulness to Allah ﷻ?
   a. Saying *'alḥamdulillāh.'*
   b. Prostrating and thanking Allah ﷻ.
   c. Using the blessings that Allah ﷻ has given us in the way He wants us to use them.

2. An example of an apparent blessing is:
   a. Our health.
   b. Tranquility in our heart.
   c. A hardship in our lives.

3. Ungratefulness is a characteristic of believers.
   a. True.
   b. False.

4. Oftentimes, our blessings are disguised in hardships and become apparent through our perseverance.
   a. True.
   b. False.

5. What is one way in which we can know that we have thanked Allah ﷻ for our blessings?

6. Explain the meaning of hidden blessings.

Activity 1.3c: Review Questions (Continued)

7. What are some of the consequences of being ungrateful toward Allah ﷻ?

8. How can you help someone who is going through a hardship realize that what is happening to them might just be a blessing in disguise?

9. What is an etiquette of expressing gratitude to Allah ﷻ? Compare it to how you might express gratitude to the people around you. Is it drastically different? If so, should it be?

Extension Activities

You can use the following extension activities for different areas of study to further explore the concepts of gratitude in this lesson.

WRITING: Create a Gratitude Journal. Students should spend the first five minutes of each day, and a few minutes at the end of every day writing down what they are grateful for; and this will help to instill thankfulness in their daily lives.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY: Take a weekly picture of something that you are grateful for. Have the students create a collage or photo book of their pictures to look back on.

OUTDOOR: Take a walk or hike outside in nature. Reflect on what you are grateful for during that time. How does it make you feel to realize the beauty of nature in that moment?

CHAPTER 2

Trials and Tribulations

2.1 Tests and the Purpose of Humankind

2.2 The Justice of Allah ﷻ

2.1 Tests and the Purpose of Humankind

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn about how tests (*ibtilāʾ*) and difficulties help us reach our purpose in life.
- Learn why Allah ﷻ tests human beings.
- Analyze positive and negative reactions to hardships in accordance with narrations from the Immaculate ones (*Maʿṣūmīn*).
- Understand that being put through hardships can elevate our status with Allah ﷻ.

Activity 2.1a: Pre Reading

Answer the following questions before beginning this lesson.

1. Define potential in your own words.

2. How do you think an apple tree reaches its potential?

3. What do you believe is your potential?

Perfection is fully realizing your potential, which for human beings, means getting closer to Allah ﷻ. If we look around us, we will see that everything including plants, animals, and insects, strive for their own perfection. They are all moving toward realizing their potential through continuous growth, even in adverse situations. For example, plants continue to grow and struggle, and the strong ones remain standing even when the weather becomes harsh. An apple tree reaches its potential when it grows and bears fruit, but it does this instinctively as it grows toward its perfection. As human beings, we have free will to choose whether to struggle and progress on our path to perfection, or turn away from it.

Allah ﷻ has given us three tools to reach Him, and perfect ourselves:

1. *ʿIbādah* (Worship)
2. *Ibtilāʾ* (Tests)
3. *Maʿrifah* (Deep Understanding)

TESTS: A PATH TO PERFECTION

As we discussed in seventh grade, the only way for us to reach perfection is through seeking closeness—*qurb*—to Allah ﷻ.

We must strive to reflect the traits of the Almighty, and become a reflection of Him. For example, Allah ﷻ is the All-Merciful (*ar-Raḥmān*), and the All-Forgiving (*al-Ghaffār*), and we should strive to reflect these traits within our own lives.

Working toward developing these attributes in ourselves will bring us closer to the true Source of these attributes, which is Allah ﷻ. When we attain these good traits in their limited sense, we will get a taste of the absolute Mercy, Justice, Forgiveness, and Love of Allah ﷻ, and therefore become closer to Him (*qurb*). This is the true purpose of life, and this is how we will be able to fulfill the meaning of being the vicegerent or a delegate of Allah ﷻ on Earth (*khalīfah*). The best way to do this is to be on the path of Allah ﷻ, perform what is obligatory (*wājib*), stay away from what is forbidden (*ḥarām*), and be in complete servitude—*ʿubūdiyyah* to Allah ﷻ alone.

IBTILĀʾ (TESTS AND TRIALS)

Part of this servitude to Allah ﷻ is to respond to the tests that we face in life in the way that He has commanded for us. In order to truly strengthen our faith and grow closer to Allah ﷻ, we must make the right decisions when we are tested. Tests are an important part of life, and exist all around us in various different forms. A math test establishes our math skills. A sports test establishes our ability in that specific sport. The most important type of tests are those which establish and build our faith.

This is because it is ultimately through strengthening one's faith that a person can reach perfection and closeness to Allah ﷻ. It is through tests that an individual can become the best possible version of oneself. In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ

"(It is) He who created death and life that He may test you [to see] which of you is best in conduct." [1]

It has been narrated from Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ that two angels descend upon the Earth. Along the way, they meet one another in the sky, and one asks the other: "Why have you been sent down?" That one responds: "Allah sent me to the people of this region to catch a fish, and give it to an oppressor who asked for a fish from this sea. So, I have the duty to go after a fisherman who fishes at this part of the ocean, and motivate him to go fishing so that a fish from his efforts will reach that oppressor. This way he will attain his wish from Allah. Why have you been sent down?" The other angel responds: "Allah sent me for a far more strange duty than yours. I have the duty to go to a servant of Allah who constantly fasts during the days, and stays awake at night for prayers. His prayers and fasts are famous in the sky, and I must cause his dish of food which he has prepared for his *iftār* to fall and be spoilt so that his test will become complete." [2]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why might the angels have been sent down for these specific tasks? How are hardships in this life and the Hereafter connected to our purpose?

Allah ﷻ has commanded us to be patient and steadfast when we face tests and trials in this life. The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have taught us that there are different types of tests, and different types of patience, some of which include: [3]

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"There are two types of patience. Patience during calamities is good, but patience with what Allah has forbidden is even better."* [4]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mulk (67), Verse 2.
2 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ*, Vol. 2, P. 465.
3 Rizvi, Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar, *Justice Of God*.
4 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 111.

1. **Test in religion *(sharīʿah)*:** This is in regard to following the laws that Allah ﷻ has decreed for us. If we exceed the limits that He has set for us, then we will become unjust, and not only will we suffer the natural effects of this, we will also suffer the consequences of our actions in the next world.

   In this type of test *(ibtilāʾ)*, we are faced with the temptation to do something which has been forbidden by Allah ﷻ. Overcoming this temptation and avoiding that sin means we have overcome a greater test, and have displayed a very high level of patience.

2. **Test of afflictions:** Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:
   "And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, and hunger, and loss of wealth, and lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient ones. Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: 'Truly, to Allah we belong, and truly to Him we shall return.'" [5]

This second category of trials—the difficulties or afflictions that we face in life—has many examples including:

- Loss of a loved one
- Financial difficulties
- Illnesses
- Delay or failure in reaching a goal one set in life
- Family problems

A major part of our faith is how we respond to these difficulties that we face in life.

We can also categorize these difficulties and afflictions as those that:

- Come about as a result of our own wrong actions or negligence. For example, a person who entrusts one's wealth to a foolish person will lose it, but this is a natural consequence of one's own action.
- Do not come about as a direct result of our actions, but are part of the natural order of the world. These include difficulties such as natural disasters, as well as difficulties brought on by other people, or the society around us.

When we reflect on the types of tests mentioned in the verses and narrations above, we can consider all different parts of our life as tests.

Every decision that we make in our life says something about our character, and every moment of life is a test for us, because each instance is a choice between obeying Allah ﷻ or disobeying Him. Sometimes, when life is easy, we tend to forget Allah ﷻ, and even this becomes a test for us. How we spend our wealth, like giving khums and charity, is also a test for us.

Let us imagine two friends: Mujtaba and Ali. They both need to make a journey through rough terrain in order to get home. Mujtaba spends a lot of time reading about the techniques for surviving the rough terrain.

He reads books, and gathers very detailed knowledge on this subject before starting his journey home. However, despite taking the time to learn everything he could, he forgets to put what he learnt into practice along the way. He gets flustered and impatient, and rather than following the advice he gained from his research, he does what seems to be the easiest at that time. Meanwhile, Ali learns what he thinks are the most necessary points to survive the journey, and thinks about how to utilize them when he is faced with difficult situations. Although he does not know as much as Mujtaba does, Ali remains calm during his journey, and applies his knowledge when he is faced with challenges on his way home.

STOP AND REFLECT: Ali and Mujtaba have the same goal, or purpose, which is that of getting home safely. Who do you think will be more successful in achieving his goal?

In this situation, Ali is more likely to achieve his purpose because he is learning what he needs to, and is then putting that into practice—he is acting on what he knows. We can reach our spiritual goal of getting closer to Allah ﷻ by responding to the tests and trials of life in the way that Allah ﷻ commanded us to. A general rule that He has told us to observe in difficult situations is that we should remain patient and persevere—no matter how painful the situation is.

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verses 155-156.

ENDURING TESTS

We have often witnessed that many of the tests which we face in our lives are not due to our own doing. We may think that Allah ﷻ is not being fair by inflicting these tests upon us. However, we must always remember that the more we suffer, the higher our status in Paradise will be, and the more rewards we will receive. In addition, we have to realize that Allah ﷻ gives more tests to those He loves because He wants them to maximize their potential which will then result in them reaching the highest positions in Paradise, and being as close to Him as possible. Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ؑ said:

"A person will have a very high, noble position near Allah. Allah will make them suffer a lot of calamities in order to reach that position. Lots of people will rush in to express their condolences to them, and express their sympathy; but if the people only knew what position Allah has granted that person, they would never sympathize with them, nor express their condolences…" [6]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think Imām al-Bāqir ؑ said that people would never sympathize with that person (going through the difficulty) if they knew about their high position near Allah ﷻ? Do you think this position is granted to everyone who is undergoing hardships? If not, then what conditions do you think this person must meet during a calamity they are faced with if they want to attain such a high position?

When Allah ﷻ tests us, if we remain patient, then we will gain the rewards of being close to Him, as well as the other rewards of Paradise. In the following narration, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ explains how a person who suffered poverty in this world will be rewarded in the next world, as long as they remain patient. On the Day of Judgment, Allah ﷻ will say the following to His servant who was poor in this world:

"I swear by My Honor that I did not make you poor to humiliate you. Now push the curtain aside, and see what I have given you instead." When the curtain is pushed aside, and the person sees what Allah is rewarding them with instead of this world, they will say: "O Allah! There was no harm for me due to what You took away from me (in the world) considering what you have given me instead (now in the Hereafter)." [7]

A major part of our faith is how we respond to these difficulties that we face in life.

6 Shaykh Ṭabarsī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār fī Ghurar al-Akhbār*, Vol. 1, P. 291.
7 *Mishkāt al-Anwār fī Ghurar al-Akhbār*, P. 712, Ḥadīth #1697.

Activity 2.1b: Reflection

What are some things we can do or think about when we are faced with a calamity or hardship in this world? Based on the above narration, write some advice for yourself to keep in mind in the future, to help you deal with hardships when you are faced with them.

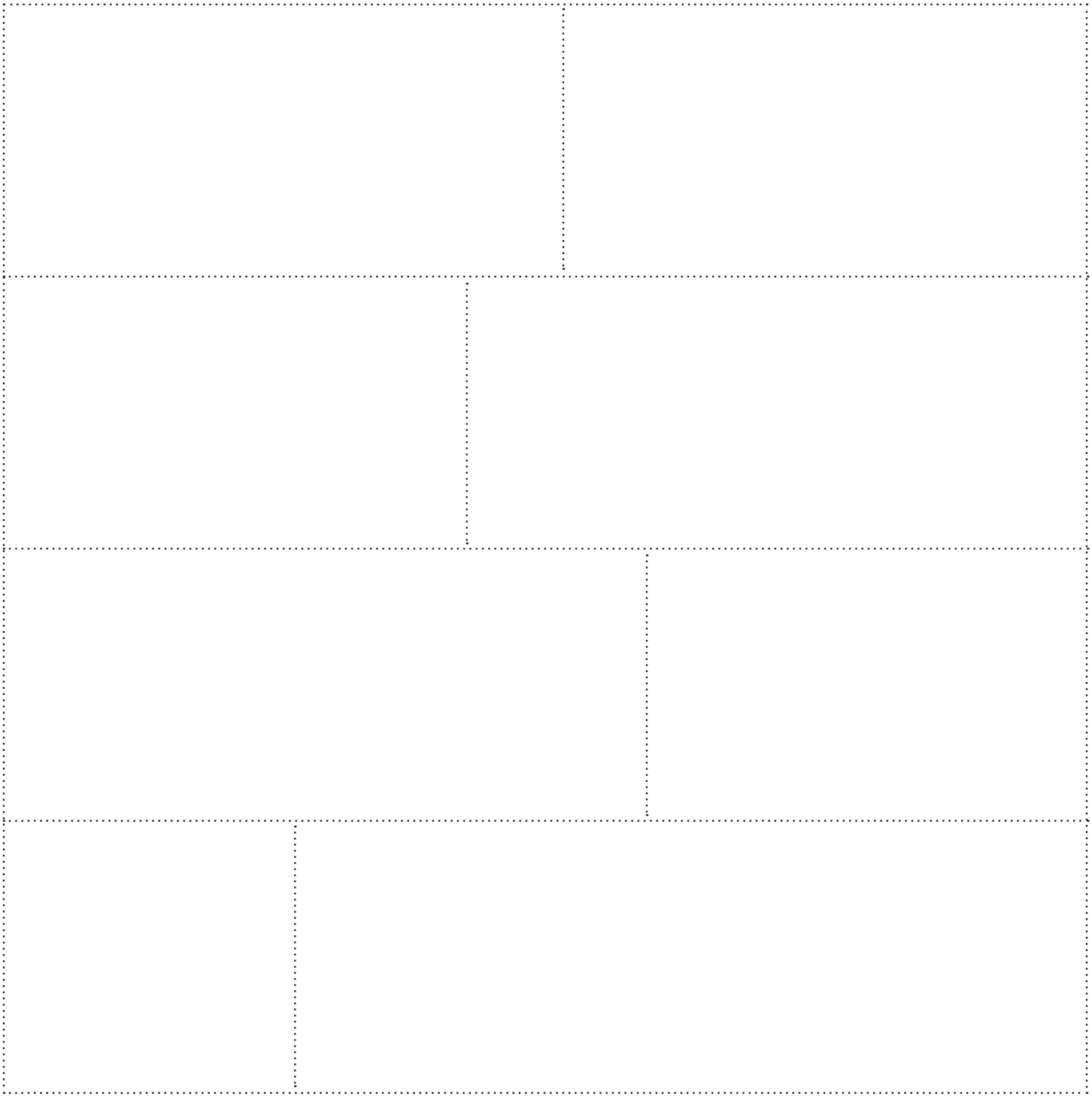
What we can learn from these two narrations is that when we face any hardship or trial in our lives, we should:

1. Change our mindset to look at these hardships and trials as opportunities to grow.
2. Remember that Allah ﷻ has a plan for each one of us to reach our perfection through these trials.
3. Remember that there is a reward and a positive outcome for every trial we face—both in this life and the Hereafter.
4. Be thankful to Allah ﷻ, and do not complain about these difficulties, or ever lose hope.
5. Think about our temporary trials in this transient world in the context of our eternal life in the Hereafter.

Activity 2.1c: Comic Strip Dialogue

Independently, create a dialogue demonstrating the advice you wrote above, using the blank comic strip boxes below. You may add more dialogue bubbles, or more picture squares if needed. Your conversation between the characters must be respectful, and exemplify how you may advise a friend or family member facing a challenge in life. Try to help them see the bigger picture, and the rewards they may receive for dealing with their hardships in a certain way.

Comic Book Strips



RESPONDING TO DIFFICULTIES

Whenever a person is faced with a test, they may react in a number of different ways.

Negative Reactions

If a person's level of knowledge, faith, and understanding are low, then the more negative their reaction to the test will be.

In the infinite Wisdom and Mercy of Allah ﷻ, He has advised us that if we want to live healthy and happy lives, then we have to try our best to avoid negative reactions when we are faced with difficulties. Some negative reactions (such as denial) are not sinful, while others (like giving up hope in the Almighty, or thinking negatively about Him) are sins which can lead to greater and greater sins. Allah ﷻ, the All-Compassionate, has made it such that not only do we have the capacity to remove the negative reactions in front of difficulties, but also to surpass them; and in fact use them as a stepping stone to reach our perfection, and be rewarded handsomely in this world and the Hereafter.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said:

"Verily, if you are patient, then the trials of destiny will befall you, and you will be rewarded for them; but if you are anxious, then not only will the trials of destiny still befall you, but you could be sinful (through them as well)." [8]

Positive Reactions

In addition to varying levels of negative reactions, there are different manners of positive reactions that a person can display when faced with difficulties as well. As the knowledge, faith, and understanding of a human being increases, it becomes easier to face these tests and grow because of them.

The highest forms of these reactions were practiced by our Prophets ؑ and Imāms ؑ, and their examples still shine through for us.

Tackling Difficulties through Patience

Patience in the Qurʾān and *aḥādīth* has been defined as:

The resistance shown by a person on the road toward perfection, against mischief, corruption, and degradation.[9]

Not getting angry, flustered, or upset about the difficulties we face; rather remaining calm and composed throughout these tests. This does not mean that we cannot have emotions or be sad through them, but we must not question the Wisdom of Allah ﷻ, or 'blame' Him when we are put through a certain tribulation in life.

Patience has been described by our Imāms ؑ as being like the 'head' in relation to the 'body' in terms of our faith. Just like a person cannot have a functioning body without a head, one cannot have true, deep faith if one does not have patience.

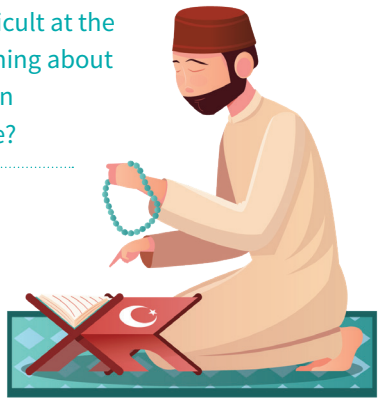
True happiness comes from within, and even though it is often influenced by factors outside ourselves, we can influence how we feel about these factors or how we react to them by looking at the positives. When Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ؑ was imprisoned, he thanked Allah ﷻ for giving him the time to devote himself to His worship.[10]

We must remember that in the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ promises that He is with those who are patient, and that He loves them.

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ

"…And surely Allah loves the patient ones." [11]

STOP AND REFLECT: What is one time where you had to display great patience during a particular hardship? What did you learn from this experience? Was it easy or difficult at the time? Would you change anything about how you handled that situation after reading everything above?



8 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 68, P. 92.
9 Āyatullāh Khamenei, *Discourse on Patience*, P. 7.
10 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 83, P. 364.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 146.

Activity 2.1d: Jigsaw!

Below are some tips for developing patience. Each student will receive one *ḥadīth* to read and reflect upon for 5 minutes.

1. **5 minutes:** Read your *ḥadīth* and write down 1 or 2 points of reflection, and 1 question that arises for you.
2. **3 minutes:** Find all the other students in your class with that same *ḥadīth*—this is now your expert group! Once you are in your group, each student will have one role: Discussion leader, recorder (to take notes), researcher (who will go through everyone's notes and summarize the main points), and a presenter.
3. **15 minutes:** With your expert group, reread the *ḥadīth*, then discuss ideas, thoughts, and questions. As a group, come up with 3 key points that the presenter can share with the class in order to teach the others about your *ḥadīth*.

Ḥadīth 1:

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said:

"The origin of patience is to have strong conviction in Allah." [12]

We need to maintain our firm belief in Allah ﷻ, and know that He sent us this test for a reason, and He will come to our rescue when we need it the most.

Ḥadīth 2:

Abā ʿAbdillāh ﷺ said:

"A free human being is free in all circumstances. Should a misfortune befall them, they bear it with patience (ṣabr). If calamities strike them, they do not shatter them. Even if taken captive and subdued, they turn that hardship into ease—as was the case of Yūsuf ﷺ, the truthful and trustworthy. His patience saved him from harm, although he was enslaved, subdued, and imprisoned. The darkness of the pit, the dread, and whatever befell him did him no harm; then Allah favored him and made the insolent tyrant—who had been his master—become his slave. Then Allah also made him His Apostle; and through him, He was merciful to the people. In this way, patience is followed by great good. So, be patient and reconcile yourself to patience in order to be rewarded." [13]

Ḥadīth 3:

Remembering the greater tests that others face. When a companion complained to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ about losing his wealth, the Prophet ﷺ said to him:

"Your predecessors (earlier Muslims) sometimes were slaughtered by an iron saw cutting their skin, veins, and flesh to the bone, but they remained committed to their faith and never complained, even when in some cases they were cut into two pieces!" [14]

Reflection:

12 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mizān al-Ḥikmah*, Ḥadīth #3459.
13 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol.2, P. 89.
14 *Discourse on Patience*, P. 7, https://library.tebyan.net/fa/Viewer/Text/143412/7.

WHAT IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE?

When we are tested, the best way for us to grow is by doing the right thing in relation to our test. Sometimes, though, we might make mistakes during a test. For example, if our friend is making us upset, we might talk to them in a way that hurts them, instead of telling them nicely. Oftentimes, it might be difficult to practice Islam in front of non-Muslims, and we may fall short of our duties. Mistakes do not mean that we have failed a test and have no way of growing and learning; rather we can learn from them, and reflect on how we could do better next time.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can we ensure that we do the right thing during tests?

The most important thing is to avoid doing anything forbidden *(ḥarām)*, and to make sure that we fulfill all of our obligatory *(wājib)* actions during any tests. However, even if we fall short in our responsibilities, do not lose hope as we can still be forgiven. But it is important not to make this into an excuse to commit sins, or to avoid our obligations. At the end of the day, Allah ﷻ does not burden us with more than what we can bear.

We have the strength within us to face every test that we are given, and we should keep this in mind when we are faced with any difficulty.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

"Allah does not task any soul beyond its capacity." [15]

If we are God-conscious all of the time, then it will make it easier for us to avoid these mistakes.

In part of a *Ḥadīth Qudsī*, Allah ﷻ promises us:

"Whoever comes close to Me a hand-span, I will come close to them an arm-span…Whoever comes toward Me walking, I will come to them running…" [16]

Allah ﷻ loves us so much, and He is **waiting** for us to move toward Him! Not because He needs us, but because He loves us, and it is **us** who need **Him**.

STOP AND REFLECT: What does it mean to be God-conscious all of the time, especially when things are easy?

15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 286.
16 Aḥsāʾī, Muḥammad, *ʿAwālī al-Laʾāliʾ al-ʿAzīziyyah*, Vol. 1, P. 56.

ḤURR: THE GREAT COMPANION OF IMĀM ḤUSAYN ؑ

In Islam, we believe that during our lifetime, we always have a chance to be forgiven by Allah ﷻ. Our mistakes and our past do not define us, or make us who we are in the eyes of Allah ﷻ. This is one of the reasons why it is so important not to reveal the mistakes of others because we do not know when they may repent and be forgiven. One of the great companions of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ in the battle of Karbalāʾ was Ḥurr. He was a soldier in Yazīd's army until the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ when he decided to leave that side and join the side of the Truth. He famously said before going to the tent of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ: "By Allah, I see myself between Paradise and Hell..." He saw that in this test of life he was facing, he had two choices: Either to make the right decision and go to the Imām's side, or make the wrong choice and stay where he was on falsehood.

When Ḥurr reached Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, he said: *"May I be your ransom, O son of the Prophet of Allah! I am the one who stopped you from returning back, and accompanied you all along, and forced you to set your tents here. But I did not know that these people would directly refuse your proposal and bring you to this present state. By Allah, if I had known that they would do this to you, I would not have undertaken that what I did. I now sincerely apologize to Allah regarding what I have done; do you think that my repentance will be accepted?"*

Imām Ḥusayn ؑ replied: *"May Allah accept your repentance! Thus, dismount from your horse."* Ḥurr then asked for permission to fight in the battle, and as he was struck down, the Imām ؑ said: *"Well done, O Ḥurr! You are free in this world as well as the Hereafter, (free) just as your mother named you."*[17] The word *'ḥurr'* means 'free' in Arabic.

17 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, Vol. 1, P. 150.

STOP AND REFLECT: What would have happened if Ḥurr never went to see Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ because he thought that his mistake was far too big? How does this change the way we should view our past mistakes?

The story of Ḥurr should give us hope that in the eyes of Allah ﷻ, we can always be forgiven for our past mistakes.

Allah ﷻ tells us in the Qurʾān: *"Say: 'O My Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins; surely it is He who is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful."* [18]

When Ḥurr realized his mistake, he knew what his responsibility was, and acted on that right away by asking for forgiveness and protecting his Imām ﷺ. Thus, he is remembered for his repentance, and his strength; and he has been raised to the status of a martyr *(shahīd)* on the plains of Karbalāʾ.

In the next lesson, we will discuss further how tests can help to purify us, and what types of trials Allah ﷻ presents to us.

CONCLUSION: TESTS ARE A NECESSARY BLESSING

Tests are a natural and necessary part of life that Allah ﷻ gives us in order to help strengthen ourselves; and are one of the three tools that we can use to grow closer to Him. Just as an exam or test in school can demonstrate our progress, our new understandings, and motivate us to keep working hard—Allah ﷻ tests us for similar reasons in this life.

Allah ﷻ gives people these tests and difficulties out of His Love and Mercy for human beings. In the Qurʾān, we read that His Mercy is the purpose for which we came into creation in the first place: "Except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for that (His Mercy) did He create them." [19]

Allah's Mercy is all around us, and is the reason why **everything** exists. He wants us to become the best we can be, and lift and strengthen us to reach our full potential—not to create misery for us.

Allah ﷻ has given us these tests to help us **succeed** and become better, not to fail or be lowered.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What do you think are some of the most common tests that our youth today face? Discuss some solutions how we can help our youth deal with these tests in a more patient and uplifting manner. Are there any steps that everyone agrees upon to help deal with these hardships?

DĪN: Religion, way of life

ʿIBĀDAH: Worship, an action that is done with the intention of getting closer to Allah ﷻ

IBTILĀʾ: Tests or trials

MAʿRIFAH: Deep understanding

QURB: Closeness to Allah ﷻ

PERFECTION: Being our best selves which in turn can help us reach closeness to Allah ﷻ

PURPOSE: The reason for which something exists, was done, made, or used

18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 53.
19 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Hūd (11), Verse 119.

Activity 2.1e: Vocabulary

Using as many of the vocabulary words above as possible, write a story about someone discovering their purpose, and then trying to achieve it. Be creative!

Activity 2.1f: Scenarios/Skits

Take a closer look at the following *ḥadīth*:

Imām ʿAli ﷺ said: *"Patience comes in the form of:*

1. *Persevering in the face of difficulties,*
2. *Persisting in an act of obedience,*
3. *Keeping oneself away from an act of disobedience."*

Using this *ḥadīth*, create one scenario for each of the three forms of patience mentioned. Be sure to include what acting on this type of patience will look like. For your scenarios, think about common tests that youth might face today. Use these to help guide your scenarios to better understand how we can deal with these tests in our lives on a regular basis.

1. Persevering in the face of difficulties

2. Persisting in an act of obedience

3. Keep oneself away from an act of disobedience

TEACHERS: This activity can be done independently, or in a group; followed by students creating skits to act out scenarios. Time and cohort dependent.

Activity 2.1g: Reflection

1. Upon reading about the purpose of human beings, what do you think your purpose is here? What are some of your future goals, and what steps do you need to take in order to achieve these goals?

2. Have you ever considered or reflected if your goals in life line up with the ultimate purpose of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ? How do you think you can do this with your goals to make them worthy in both this world and the Hereafter?

2.2 The Justice of Allah ﷻ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn the three facets of the Justice of Allah ﷻ.
- Explore how the Justice of Allah ﷻ affects people and the choices they make.
- Understand the importance of acting with justice in our own lives.

REVIEWING THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The five fundamental beliefs, pillars, or roots of Islam *(Uṣūl ad-Dīn)* are:

- There is One God who is very unique: *Tawḥīd*
- Allah ﷻ is Just: *ʿAdl*
- Allah ﷻ sent Prophets ﷺ to guide humanity: *Nubuwwah*
- Allah ﷻ sent 12 Imāms ﷺ to guide humanity, they continue the message of the Prophets ﷺ: *Imāmah*
- The Hereafter, or afterlife; once we die, we will be brought back to life and have to face the consequences of all our actions in this world: *Maʿād*

In our previous lessons, we discussed the Unity of Allah ﷻ, and some of His Attributes. In this lesson, we will discuss another important Attribute of Him: the Justice of Allah ﷻ.

THE IMPORTANCE OF JUSTICE

Justice means to give everyone and everything its due right. Human beings are born with an innate understanding that justice is good and desirable. Allah ﷻ, who is All-Just, orders us to be just, especially in the way we deal with people around us.

FACETS OF THE JUSTICE OF ALLAH

There are three major facets of the Justice of Allah ﷻ:

1. **JUSTICE IN CREATION:** We believe that Allah ﷻ gave a Divine decree for everything to come into existence. With that decree, Allah ﷻ also has given it a certain measure to specify its limits, shape, form, time, place, etc. In His creation, Allah ﷻ is All-Just, which means that He provides His creations with whatever abilities they need in order to fulfill their purpose. Allah ﷻ decrees mountains to act as supports for the earth, He decrees for human beings to have the power of free will, etc. Each decree follows the limits that Allah ﷻ has set for it, and helps creation achieve its purpose. Humans are also given different abilities and attributes, so that each one of them can fulfill their unique purpose in this world.
2. **JUSTICE IN LEGISLATION:** We believe that Allah ﷻ is All-Just in His laws. He created everything, and therefore knows human beings and their limits. For instance, He created men and women with different physical and emotional capabilities and limits. It is therefore necessary in matters where physical and emotional capabilities make a difference (for example, when raising a family, or earning a living), for each gender to have different rules in order to ensure that both can achieve their purpose while remaining within their limits.

3. **JUSTICE IN REWARD AND PUNISHMENT:** We believe that Allah ﷻ created the laws of cause and effect. He is All-Just when He rewards or punishes in this world and the Hereafter, because these are all the direct results of our own actions.

The followers of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—unlike all other Muslims—have as one of their five main pillars of faith, the belief in the Justice of Allah ﷻ. The Imāms ﷺ emphasized this Attribute of Allah ﷻ in order to counter the false beliefs of others regarding Allah's Justice. Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

> "The foundation of religion is Tawḥīd and ʿAdl." [1]

Some of the false beliefs regarding Allah's Justice that the Imāms ﷺ wanted to counter included the belief that human beings have no free will, but rather their actions are predestined; or the belief that humans have no way of understanding what is right and good without Divine revelation.

Activity 2.2a: Summarize & Simplify

Reread the portion above and fill in the chart below. Think of an example in your own life where you experience each type of the Justice of Allah ﷻ. When you are finished, find a partner and share your charts, then write their example as your second example below. Are your summaries different? Did you find different examples? Discuss.

	Justice in Creation	Justice in Legislation	Justice in Rewards and Punishments
Definition/ Summary			
Example 1			
Example 2			

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *At-Tawḥīd*, P. 96.

JUSTICE IN REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

Free will vs. Predestination

Certain groups of Muslims believe that Allah ﷻ determines all our actions, and therefore we are forced to do whatever we do. This leads to such Muslims blaming Allah ﷻ for all the problems that occur in their lives, and not taking responsibility for their own evil deeds. It also entails them to the following question: Why would Allah ﷻ send someone to Hell for doing evil when He actually forced them to do that bad action? In contrast, other groups of people believe that Allah ﷻ hands over absolute control to human beings, so they have complete free will. Their beliefs limit the Power of Allah ﷻ with this statement.

In contrast to both of these opinions, the Imāms ﷺ taught us that although some things in our lives are predetermined (like the natural color of our hair, who our parents will be, where we are born, our maximum life span, where we will die, etc.), many other things in our lives are under our control. Human beings have been given the gift of free will; and they make most of their decisions based on their own free will. Allah ﷻ knows what choices everyone will make, but He does not force anyone to choose one option over another.

It has been narrated from a few of our Imāms ﷺ that they described the reality of free will in this way:

فَإِنَّهُ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ لا جَبْرَ ولا تَفْوِيض

"It is a matter which is in between the two matters—it is neither absolute determination, nor absolute free will." [2]

The Imāms ﷺ emphasized that we are responsible for all of our own actions, because it is us who chose to do them, or not to do them, through our own free will. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ explains this:

"Whatever you can blame a person for, is one's own action; and whatever you cannot blame them for, is the act of Allah. Allah blames a person for drinking alcohol, committing adultery, etc. Thus, these are the acts of humans. However, Allah does not blame one as to why they are sick, or why they are of a certain length, or why their skin color is dark or fair—as these are the acts of Allah." [3]

STOP AND REFLECT: How does the balance between free will and limitation exemplify the Justice of Allah ﷻ?

When Allah ﷻ rewards or punishes us in this world or the Hereafter, He is doing so in accordance with the choices that we make in our lives. He promises in the Qurʾān that He will reward those who do good with blessings and bliss. Those who disbelieve and persist in evil will eventually destroy their spiritual hearts and prevent themselves from being able to receive the Mercy of Allah ﷻ, and therefore will be worthy to receive His punishment.

At the same time, we do not have complete free will. There are many things about our lives and ourselves that we cannot change. We have all been given certain abilities, and limitations to those abilities. Allah ﷻ will judge everyone according to the abilities that He gave them.

2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 5, P. 57.

3 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 5, P. 59.

Activity 2.2b: Understanding the Balance

In groups of three, read and discuss the following comic. How does the Imām ﷺ demonstrate the balance between free will and predestination?

Now think about some actions in your own life. As individuals, we each have power within certain limitations to exercise our free will. Brainstorm an action which you can do based on your own free will, but is bound in some way by the limitation that Allah ﷻ has placed on you. An easy way to begin thinking about this is to follow Imām ʿAlī's approach on the subject. In *Nahj al-Balāghah*, he says:

"I came to know Allah, the Glorified, through the breaking of determinations, change in intentions, and loss of courage." [4]

Think of your abilities and limitations that are outside of your control.[5] For example, you can choose what to eat, but your stomach has limited space.

Once you have thought of a scenario which demonstrates the balance between free will and predestination, plan a skit to share with the class. Two of the group members should act as characters in the skit, while the third one will narrate and explain the balance between free will and predestination. Returning to our example, you could depict a mother and child eating dinner on a regular night, and then have them exercise their free will to eat certain foods and experience the limitation of being full.

Your skit should be 1-3 minutes long. Use the rubric below to guide your planning and skit preparation.

4 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Saying #250.

5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 5, P. 197.

Activity 2.2b: Understanding the Balance (Rubric)

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Body Language/ Etiquette	Struggled to maintain respectful language during the dialogue/ skit.	Language used was somewhat respectful, but left room for improvement.	Language used was respectful, but body language could have been improved.	Maintained respectful language and body language during the entire dialogue/skit.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes in the skit.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet Islamic principles mentioned in the lesson.	Content met Islamic principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all Islamic principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all Islamic principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Skit lacked organization and cohesiveness.	Skit was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more.	Skit was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked cohesiveness.	Skit was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of content and cohesiveness.
Quality	Content presented was not convincing or compelling.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose, and lacked quality.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Content presented was extremely compelling and convincing.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS IN THE HEREAFTER

Allah ﷻ confirms in many parts of the Noble Qurʾān that He will judge people according to their actions. If a person performs good deeds, then they will be rewarded with good, and in fact this good will be multiplied manifold; and if a person does evil without repenting, then they will be recompensed accordingly. He never oppresses anyone, nor treats anyone unfairly. He states in the Qurʾān:

"Allah burdens not a person beyond one's ability…" [6]

"...And they will not be oppressed so much as a single date-thread." [7]

These verses tell us that not only will Allah ﷻ never be unfair to us in any situation, but in fact, He will be completely Just when it comes to responding to all of our actions.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can the knowledge we just gained regarding the Justice of Allah ﷻ help us when we find ourselves in difficult situations? If Allah ﷻ says that He will not burden us beyond our abilities then what does that tell us about the trials that we have to face on a regular basis in our lives?

Allah ﷻ also says:

"So, whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom shall see it; and whoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it." [8]

STOP AND REFLECT: The "it" in the verse above refers to our action. Why is this verse saying that we will see the action itself, and not the consequence or reward of that action?

Allah ﷻ is so Just that in the Hereafter we will not get the recompense for our action, but in fact, we will get our action itself. We will see the reality or manifestation of each action that we performed in this world. We will see our action as a creature or manifestation in that world, and we will immediately recognise it as our action in this world.

Let us look at some examples of the manifestations of our actions:

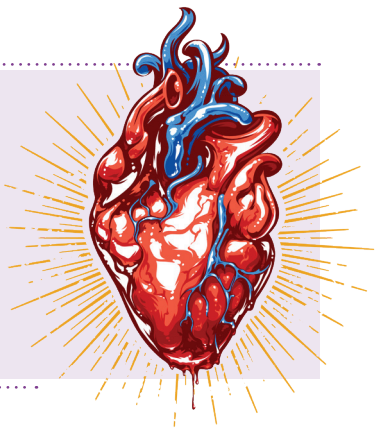
- If we make people around us happy, then when we are raised from our graves, we will have a beautiful friend to protect us. While other people will be terrified by all the horrifying things that are happening on that day, this friend will walk ahead of us, and protect us from the fears of that day.[9]
- When people are in Hell, they will be attacked by vicious dogs. The food for these dogs are the words of people when they backbite. When we speak negatively about someone behind their back in this world, we are feeding those dogs that are in Hell who will then attack us.[10]
- When we think about Allah ﷻ and recite words of His remembrance, then we are building bricks for our castles and planting trees for ourselves in Paradise.[11]

ALLAH ﷻ DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

Being just and fair also means to not discriminate between people based on characteristics such as race, nationality, lineage, age, or gender—no matter what the view of society in general is. Allah ﷻ is the most Just, and He never discriminates or favors one group over another due to their outer characteristics.

He looks at every single person equally, and the only reason for Him to look at one person more favorably than another—whether in this world or the next—is because of their God-consciousness and commitment to serving Him. This is very just because it means that **all** people have an equal opportunity to earn Allah's satisfaction. The Prophet ﷺ said

"Indeed Allah does not judge you by your appearance, nor your wealth; rather He looks at your hearts and your deeds." [12]



6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 286.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 71.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zalzalah (99), Verses 6-7.
9 Leghaei, Mansour, *Journey to the Unseen World.*
10 *Journey to the Unseen World.*
11 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 8, P. 176.
12 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 11, P. 264.

Activity 2.2c: Rediscover and Apply

Read the scenarios in the chart below. For each scenario, identify whether it is based on free will or predestined, and explain your reasoning.

SCENARIO 1

When Rabab went to the masjid on Thursday, they announced that they were having a fundraiser for Muslim refugees. Rabab checked her wallet and she had $10 cash. She put her $10 in the donation box.

Free Will	Predestination/Outside of Free Will

SCENARIO 2

Adam always wanted to go on the *Arbaʿīn* walk. His father told him that when he turns 13, then he can go. The year that Adam was finally old enough to go for the walk, there was a Global Pandemic, so disappointed and heartbroken, he had to stay home.

Free Will	Predestination/Outside of Free Will

PRACTICING JUSTICE

Justice is the foundation of ethics in Islam. All other good ethical traits have some limitations, but justice is always good, without any conditions. If we want to perfect ourselves as Muslims, then we must try to act in a way that is in line with the Attributes of Allah ﷻ, and since justice is one of Allah's main Attributes, we must also strive to be just.

We see many examples in the Qurʾān where Allah ﷻ commands us to be just, no matter what the situation:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

"Verily, Allah enjoins justice (al-ʿAdl) and goodness (al-Iḥsān)..." [13]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۚ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ

"O you who believe! Stand up firmly for Allah and be just witnesses; and let not the enmity and hatred of others prevent you from being just. Be just: that is nearer to righteousness..." [14]

...وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۖ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ۚ ...

"And whenever you give your word, be just, even if a near relative (is concerned); and fulfill the covenant of Allah." [15]

We can see from these verses that besides the general command to justice, we are also expected to be fair:

- Even when dealing with our enemies, or people we dislike.
- Even if the conflict involves a family member, or a close friend.

In all cases, we must give everyone their due right.

13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Naḥl (16), Verse 90.

14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 8.

15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 152.

Activity 2.2d: Review

Read the scenarios below. For each scenario, identify how to act with justice, and explain why your answer demonstrates justice. As you are formulating your answers, think about the rights of each person in the situation.

What is Justice? (Ensure that your answer is based on the lesson above.)

Scenario 1: Māshāʾ Allah, you are president of the student council! Your group held a lot of successful events and fundraisers, and now you must decide what to do with the money you all raised. Your cousin, who is also the treasurer, thinks that the funds should be used for a new basketball hoop. Your teacher thinks the money should be used to purchase new projectors for each classroom. The students of the school all differ on whether to spend the money on improved cafeteria tables, or new science lab equipment. How should you decide what to do with the money?

Scenario 2: Ammar and his friends enjoy eating lunch together every day. One day Zaid is rude to Ammar during the first period. At lunchtime, Ammar's friends ask him what happened with Zaid—they wanted to know the details of the confrontation, and Ammar's plan for retaliation. How should Ammar respond?

Scenario 3: Sherbanu is the senior most member, and captain of her school's basketball team. Her teammates all respect her and follow her lead. Halfway through the year, Ruqayyah joins the school and the basketball team. Ruqayyah is a stronger basketball player, so the coach makes her the captain of the team after only two weeks of practice. The basketball team is very loyal to Sherbanu, and they do not know Ruqayyah very well, so they decide to secretly keep following Sherbanu's lead and go to her when they need advice or help with their skills. What should Sherbanu do?

Activity 2.2e: Reflection

Justice requires knowledge of others' rights. In order to "give everyone and everything their due right," one must know what are the rights of each person and thing. One source we can use to learn more about this is Imām Zaynul ʿĀbidīn's *Risālat al-Ḥuqūq*. Spend a few minutes reading through a few of the rights that the 4th Imām ﷺ defines, and choose one that resonates with you. Below, share the right, a short reflection on why it appealed to you, and ideas on how to ensure you fulfill that right.

The right:

Reflection, and how you will fulfill that right:

CHAPTER 3

Religion and Guidance

3.1 Need for Religion

3.2 ʿIsmah of the Prophets

3.3 Imāmah

3.4 Shafāʿah and Tawassul

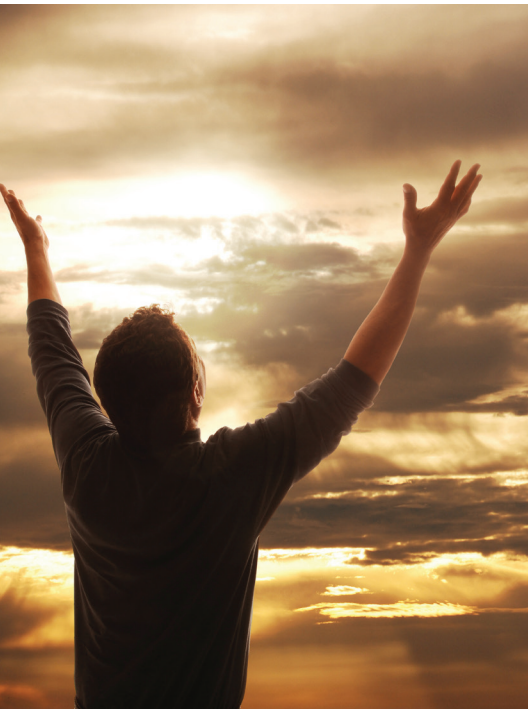
3.1 Need for Religion

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the origins and purpose of religion; and learn why every person needs to investigate then find a way of life.
- Explore the connection between our purpose in this world, and religion as a way of life.
- Identify how secularism and science are tools with limits.
- Discover the law of grace *(luṭf)*, and how we can get closer to Allah ﷻ.

QURB ILĀHĪ:
closeness to Allah ﷻ



GETTING CLOSER TO ALLAH ﷻ

A man was just wandering through the city without any direction. The people around him thought that he looked lost, so they asked him: "Excuse me sir, what are you looking for?" The man replied: "I am looking for something, but I am not sure what it is!"

STOP AND REFLECT: What do we think about in regard to the man in this story? What is he looking for?

We realize that the man in this story is lost—he has no purpose; and he has no direction. What if the man knew a little bit about what he was looking for, even if not necessarily the name of the building, or what it looked like? He would still be lost. If he knew the name, what the building looks like, and the directions of how to get there, then we would say that the man has some purpose and direction.

Our ultimate purpose in life is to have *qurb Ilāhī*—closeness to Allah ﷻ. We often use the phrase *"qurbatan ilallāh"* to describe our intention for *ṣalāh*, or other *wājibāt*. This phrase means "for the purpose of getting closer to Allah ﷻ." All of our good actions can be made into worship when we have this intention.

FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING:

The metaphor of the lost man implies that if he knows the name of the building, what it looks like, and has directions to get there, then he will not be considered lost. How does this metaphor translate into the search for our purpose in life and religious guidance? What are the three things that we must know about, and believe in, in order to be Islamically guided and avoid being lost? **(Hint: think about the testimony of faith (the *shahādah*) that we recite to become Muslim!)**

EXTENSION: What happens when we only know about a few of the important pieces of knowledge for our religion, but do not know all of the necessary items?

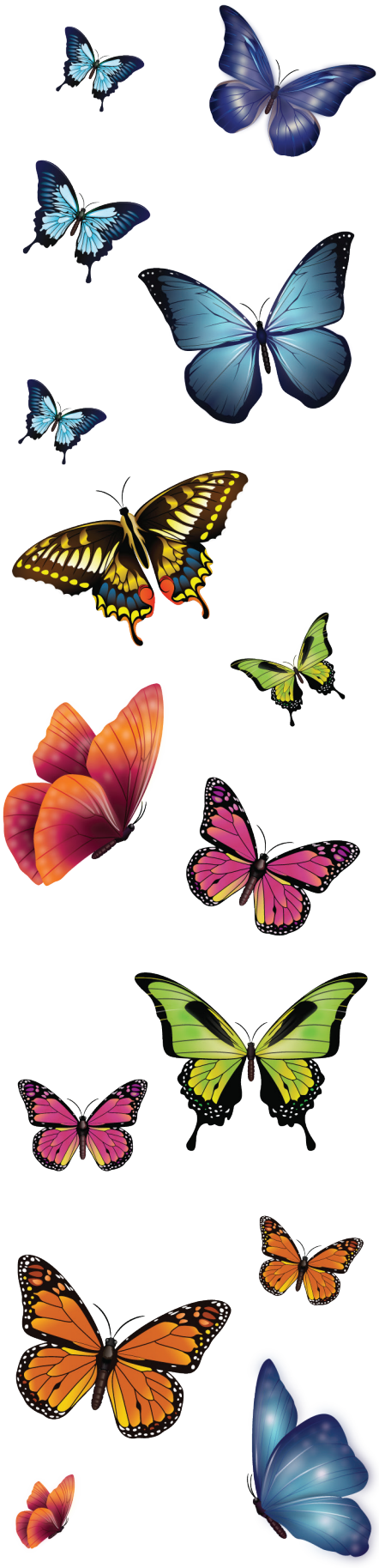
If our purpose in life is closeness to the Almighty ﷻ, then we should try to learn more about Him. The more we know about Allah ﷻ, and our religion—the system toward Him, the Divine system—the closer we can get to our Creator.

We can reflect on ourselves to attain this closeness to Allah ﷻ. If we recognize that all goodness within us is a reflection of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ, and that He has the perfect, absolute versions of those attributes, then it is only natural that we will try to change ourselves to be more like Him.

We all like to be kind, generous, and loved by others. Everyone is drawn to peace and justice, and when we recognize that Allah ﷻ is the All-Just and that all justice is from Him, we will gravitate to this most perfect Being, and get to know Him better. He is the All-Perfect, and He is the Truth, and everything that is perfect and true comes from Him.

Imagine that you meet a new person at the masjid. Initially, you might not want to expand your circle of friends or get to know them better, but then you observe that this person is very helpful, caring, and kind to others. There is a natural goodness about them that makes you want to be their friend! Allah ﷻ is an endless ocean of perfection and greatness, and once we begin to recognize this, then naturally we will want to get closer to Him.

We might even realize that Allah ﷻ has placed within us the ability to develop some of His Attributes in a limited sense. It is this Divinely-inspired, innate nature that we must develop to get closer and closer to Him.



Activity 3.1a: Reflection

What are some examples of the beauty and perfection of Allah ﷻ that we see all around us?

Think about things as small as the structure of a butterfly and its wings, or as big as the Earth's rotation around the sun.

With a partner, list ten evidences of the perfection or greatness of Allah ﷻ that you observe. Your list can include physical things in the world, or non-physical actions or attributes.

Consider what kind of Creator would have the power or skill to create the items on your list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

CLASS EXTENSION: As a class, write all of your lists on the whiteboard and compare your findings. What are some things that many people came up with? What are some new observations that came to light? How will these observations pull you closer to Allah ﷻ, and draw you to seek out more information on the Creator?

LAW OF LUṬF

LUṬF: To be gentle or soft, flexible, and easy-going in one's actions and interactions with others with intricate precision and detail

LAW OF LUṬF: Refers to Allah's *luṭf* toward us

One of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ is that He is *al-Laṭīf*. *Luṭf* is a subtle type of Mercy. *Luṭf* is a specific branch of Allah's Mercy *(raḥmah)* upon us.

The **Law of *Luṭf*** refers to Allah's *luṭf*—a specific, subtle type of mercy in the form of religion—that guides us closer to His obedience, and further away from His disobedience, and stems from Allah's Wisdom *(ḥikmah)*. If we discard or disregard the commands of Allah ﷻ, then we will be like the aimless person wandering around. However, our purpose in life is to seek closeness to Allah ﷻ through His servitude and obedience, but we can only do that if we know how to obey Him in the first place.

As we discussed in the seventh grade, it is through our intellect *(ʿaql)* that we realize there is so much we do not know, and thus we need a guide. We do not fully understand what is good or bad for us, so we need something to guide us from a source that knows everything. This is why Allah ﷻ—out of His *luṭf* and never-ending grace—has given us an instruction manual: religion!

If we pay attention to the world around us, we can see that Allah ﷻ has provided us with ways to fulfill all of our needs. For example, He created thirst, so He also created water. It would not make sense for Allah ﷻ to leave us alone when it comes to our spiritual needs. He created this need, but also what we need to fulfill it, which is religion.

Religion helps us fulfill those needs and reach our true purpose in life! Allah ﷻ gave us religion because He wants us to become the best we can be, and reach our highest potential. This is from His *luṭf* and love for us.

STOP AND REFLECT: How does the following verse of the Qurʾān relate to the Law of Grace?

"Your Lord has ordained upon Himself Mercy." [1]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 54.

ISLAM: OUR WORLDVIEW

A worldview is a perspective or philosophy through which people understand life and this world. Everyone looks through life through the lens of their worldviews. We might put importance on viewing the world through our cultural understanding, or our age, or even our career path.

STOP AND REFLECT: How do you think our worldview influences our actions and decisions?

These are naturally a part of who we are, but we should always keep the worldview of Islam in mind, because only Islam is from our Creator and can help us see the world for what it truly is, and give us success in this world and the next, based on our responsibility.

Islam should be our worldview, and be the lens through which we see everything. When this happens, everything will fall into place. For example, when we are choosing a career path, we will not sacrifice Islamic values to be successful, such as by earning *ḥarām* money, being unjust, or interacting with non-*maḥrams* excessively.

If we have an Islamic Worldview, then it will be easier for us to make good and righteous decisions that can help us get closer to Allah ﷻ because we will see the world from an Islamic point of view. For example, if we give something to the needy, then we will not see it as a loss, but rather that we just made a very profitable transaction with Allah ﷻ.

WORLDVIEW: A perspective or philosophy through which people understand life and this world.

Activity 3.1b: In the Worldview

Below is a chart of how different worldviews might perceive a certain situation. For ease of understanding, these are shortened and simplified, but they capture the general attitude of a person. Fill in what the Islamic Worldview would be for each scenario.

Scenario	Someone who believes that this world is all about "fun"	Someone who looks at the world in terms of money	Someone who wants to be popular	Islamic Worldview
Prayer	It is too boring, and is not worth the effort or time.	It does not bring about any material reward, I can use that time to gain more money instead.	It might help me make friends when people see how religious I am at the masjid, so I will pray there; but it will not help me with my school friends.	
Watching a movie	The best thing in the world! I can spend unlimited time doing this, and watch any movie that I want to.	It depends on how much it costs to go to a movie theater, then I will decide whether to go or not.	If it is a popular movie, then I will watch it so I can talk to all my friends about it, even if it is not good to watch.	
Career Path	I want to do what I like, no matter what it is; and I will do anything to get there.	I need to find a career in which I can earn the most money, even if it does not help others.	I want to be famous, so I will become an actor, no matter what the cost.	
Helping an elderly neighbor	What is the point of it? There is no fun in it for me!	I will only help them if they pay me.	What will my friends think if they see me doing this? They invited me to a party and I am running late!	

REMEMBERING OUR PURPOSE

As Muslims, we know that we have an All-Perfect and All-Wise Creator—Allah ﷻ—who gave us a perfect religion, Islam, to reach our full potential and become closer to Him.

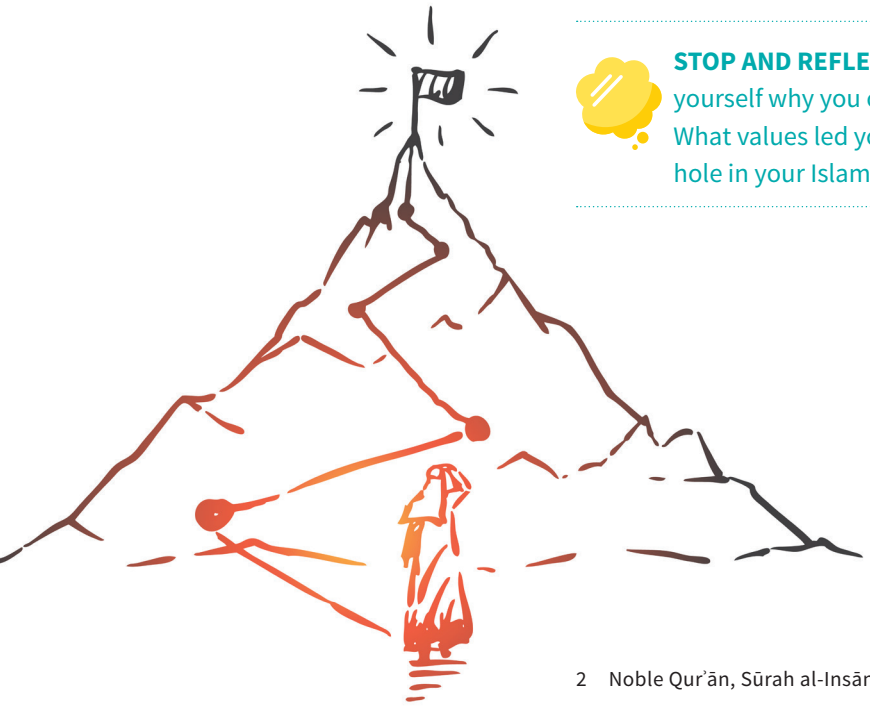
Every creation of Allah ﷻ has been created to fulfill a purpose. As human beings, we are a special creation of Allah ﷻ with the potential to reflect His Attributes. This is a special potential for humans because we have been given free will to choose whether to grow closer to Allah ﷻ, or turn away from Him. Allah ﷻ tells us in the Qurʾān:

"Surely, We have guided them (human beings) to the way: they may be thankful or unthankful." [2]

We need to try our best to get closer to Allah ﷻ by following His religion. Following anyone or anything other than Allah ﷻ means that we are worshiping something other than Him. Unfortunately, we can worship many things without realizing it, even our own desires. But true freedom is letting go of all these things and only worshiping Allah ﷻ, who can lead us to our real purpose. When we have this higher perspective in mind, then we can make the best decisions through this lens, even if those decisions are difficult. We will realize that there is wisdom behind every part of our religion, and that religion must be a part of every aspect of our lives. If people do not have this perspective in mind, then they will think of religion as restricting their freedom as human beings.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about the priorities that you have in your life. How do you spend your time? What activities do you do with excitement, and what do you push off or procrastinate to do? Are there situations in which you prioritize something else other than Allah ﷻ? How would maintaining an Islamic Worldview help with these situations?

STOP AND REFLECT: Try to remember a time when you committed a sin. Ask yourself why you committed that sin? What was your priority at that time? What values led you to choose that sin to perform? How can you patch this hole in your Islamic Worldview?



2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Insān (76), Verse 3.

THE SECULAR WORLDVIEW AND SCIENCE

Secularism is the principle of separation of religion from government. Some countries are very boastful about this practice, and it often leads to residents of those countries doing the same in their own lives.

SECULAR WORLDVIEW: To restrict religion to people's personal lives, and not allow it to be manifested in the public; to remove God from the picture

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think it problematic to restrict religion to personal lives, and avoid using religion in society?

If we take Islam as our religion and worldview, then we will make every decision in our lives through the lens of religion, and based on the laws of Allah ﷻ. Historically, many civilizations around the world used religion as the foundation for their society. Every decision was made using this lens.

Whenever a person takes something other than religion as their worldview, they are actually replacing religion. We saw this in the worldview chart activity. Certain societies emphasize a secular worldview, which means to restrict religion to people's personal lives. This system is meant to keep people away from using religion as their worldview. Instead, people are encouraged to practice religion privately in their homes, but not bring their religion to public life, such as in schools or workplaces. We may not see this at first, but it is often quite clear when we look at how religion is being replaced by other things, such as science or looking up to celebrities in various countries.

We cannot use our nose to determine the color of a book. This may seem obvious, but this is what we are doing when we try to use science to answer questions about God and His religion. We cannot use science to determine the best poem, or how a person will react emotionally to a particular situation, but yet people want to use it to argue against religion and Allah ﷻ.

Science can only examine what is measurable: Empirical Data. It is limited to the five senses. Yet, as we know, anything that can be measured or is made up of something else is limited. For example, we are made up of bones and flesh, so if those did not exist, neither would we. Even at a microscopic level, if we were made up of atoms, then if atoms did not exist, we would not exist either.

If Allah ﷻ was made up of something else, then He would be dependent on that thing, which would limit Him. But Allah ﷻ cannot be limited in this way. The secular perspective tells us that this material world is the most important.

Science is only meant to be a tool to measure the material world. Islamic civilizations have made many scientific advancements while having faith in Allah ﷻ. From advancing the astrolabe—which is a tool that determines time from constellations—to creating the first modern camera, Muslims have been at the forefront of scientific advancements. Even today, they have made advancements in medicine and stem-cell research, while always maintaining the Worldview of Islam. Science and Islam do not contradict each other, but science can never take the place of religion; rather, it can be one of the ways of getting closer to Allah ﷻ by appreciating His signs in creation.

Activity 3.1c: The Signs in Science

We mentioned that science can be a means of getting closer to Allah ﷻ because it shows His signs in creation. The issue that most scientists face is that they attribute the grandeur of scientific discoveries to mother nature, or to nature itself without accounting for the fact that each effect seen in nature must have an ultimate cause.

Choose one very common scientific discovery such as gravity, the water cycle, the spinning of the Earth on an axis, etc. Research the scientific discovery that you choose in detail to understand the intricacies of the process, and how it could go wrong. Write one paragraph about the new details that you learned, and the importance of your topic in relation to our daily existence as human beings—this is the secular portion of the assignment.

Write a second paragraph connecting your topic to Allah ﷻ as the Creator—how many different variables has Allah ﷻ kept in perfect harmony to ensure that whatever science explains actually happens? What would happen if we did not have a perfect, infinite Creator who made and maintains all of these processes that keep us alive? Share your paragraphs with the class tomorrow.

EXTENSION: Discuss how the secular paragraph that students wrote above is incomplete without the second paragraph and the acknowledgement of a Creator. Draw a connection between this issue and the larger issue of cutting religion and Allah ﷻ out of everyday life.

Activity 3.1d: Cookie Consumerism

IF YOU GIVE A MOUSE A COOKIE

http://bitly.ws/show/zXCx

Before reading this section of the lesson, as a class read or watch a video from a reading of Laura Numeroff's—*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. Pay attention to each of the mouse's requests, their reaction upon the fulfillment of their request, and their thought process which leads to their next request. What motivates the mouse? Why can they not just eat the cookie and get back to their work? Compare the beginning and the end of the story—what lesson is being taught here?

Part of the Secular Worldview is consumerism, which encourages people to buy more than what they truly need. This can be a worldview that replaces religion. When we want to have more, then our goal will be endless. We see this a lot in advertising, when companies try to sell us products that we do not really need. They want us to think that more material wealth will allow us to purchase more things, which will make us happier. However, true contentment can only come from our connection to Allah ﷻ and reflecting His Attributes.

Being "content" and being "happy" are not necessarily the same thing. When you are content, you are at peace with your surroundings, even if they make you sad or full of sorrow. After the Battle of Karbalāʾ, in the famous sermon of Lady Zaynab in the courtyard of Ibn Ziyād, she said the following famous phrase: "I saw nothing but beauty." We know that she mourned the loss of her beloved brother and Imām ؑ, other members of their family, and the brave soldiers in his army, but she also knew that she was on the side of Truth, and was content with what had befallen her on this path of Allah ﷻ.

We will never truly be content with the material world because it is limited, and not a tool for reaching true contentment. As human beings, we naturally look for the unlimited and the infinite because of our innate nature *(fiṭrah)*. When we make our purpose in life something that is limited, then we will never be satisfied. Before we perform any action in life, we should always keep in mind the Worldview of Islam, and be vigilant when we are presented with other worldviews. Then, we hope to be able to fulfill our true purpose in life, and become the best version of ourselves by reaching closeness to Allah ﷻ.

CONCLUSION

To truly investigate and find a way of life, we must first examine how people make their decisions. Many people use their own philosophy and perception of life (their own worldview) to guide all of their decisions. We need to be aware and hold ourselves accountable for all of our daily actions and choices, and make sure that we are using the Islamic Worldview to make any decisions.

Our primary responsibility—which is dictated by the purpose of life—is to fulfill the obligations which Allah ﷻ has outlined for us.

Activity 3.1d (Continued)

In groups of three, think of your own scenario that is similar to *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. Your scenario must include one primary goal which evolves to include three secondary goals. For example, someone who wants to buy a new house, but immediately upon buying that house decides to build a shed in the backyard, which leads them to wanting a pool in the backyard, which leads them to buying a slide and waterfall for the pool—all without stopping to thank Allah ﷻ, or even feel content with what they already have. As a group, you will act out your scenario for the class, stopping after each goal to explain why the main character ended up pursuing a secondary goal, and why they were not content with their primary achievement. During your explanations, be sure to mention how the main character could have found contentment in achieving their objective without immediately moving to yet another worldly goal. Be sure to explain how having an Islamic Worldview could have helped the main character.

Activity 3.1e: Review Questions

Answer the following questions.

1. What is our ultimate purpose in life? What is the first step to achieving this goal? Revisit the reading to find your answers!

2. What is the Law of *Luṭf*? Explain what it means using an example.

3. What is the difference between contentment and happiness?

4. This lesson discussed *qurb Ilāhī*, the Law of *Luṭf*, and the importance of an Islamic Worldview. How are these three concepts tied together? How do these concepts strengthen or explain each other? Use the Venn Diagram below to help you think about and explain how this lesson's concepts overlap, and work to help us fulfill our purpose in life.

Activity 3.1e: Review Questions (Continued)

5. We live in more or less secular societies which are run by people with relatively Secular Worldviews. Spend some time reading/watching/listening to the news, and identify one issue in society that is caused by the Secular Worldview around us. Explain how a Secular Worldview caused the issue, and explain how things would be handled differently if an Islamic Worldview was used instead.

6. Work through each scenario below using the assigned worldview to respond. How would someone with each worldview think and act in each scenario?

SCENARIO	THOUGHTS	ACTIONS
Layla's mother is her best friend—they do almost everything together. During Layla's last year of high school, her mother is diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.	**Islamic Worldview:**	
	Secular Worldview: Valuing Joy	
The day after his shoes ripped, Jawad buys a new pair of runners. Two weeks later his favorite basketball player comes out with a new style of runners that function the same, but look very cool. Jawad's two best friends at school both go and buy the shoes only five days after they are released.	**Islamic Worldview:**	
	Secular Worldview: Valuing Trends	
After being accepted into the University of his choice, Haidar is told to choose which on campus housing he would like to live in. Dorm A has personal bathrooms, a kitchenette, and a huge gym, but is open to upperclassmen and allows alcohol throughout the entire building. Dorm B offers two shared bathrooms on each floor, and a common kitchen for the building, but does not allow alcohol anywhere in the building.	**Islamic Worldview:**	
	Secular Worldview: Valuing Comfort	

3.2 ʿIsmah of the Prophets ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the necessity of a Proof *(Ḥujjah)* in every community.
- Explain why the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ must be free from sins and immaculate *(Maʿṣūm)*.
- Judge what characteristics we should live by to live up to our Muslim identity.

Activity 3.2a: Pre-Reading Reflection

Imagine a classroom without a teacher. Would it be a place of learning for the students without the presence of a teacher as a guide? Why or why not?

PROOF (ḤUJJAH) OF ALLAH ﷻ

For every community throughout the ages, Allah ﷻ sent a proof for (or against) that community in the form of a Prophet ﷺ or the successor of a Prophet. This includes all communities throughout history without any exception. This 'Proof' of Allah ﷻ is called a *Ḥujjah* in Arabic. Without the presence of such a proof in a community, it would not be logical to have expectations that the community will follow the message of Allah ﷻ.

A Prophet ﷺ or his successor is a proof for (or against) the people of their time because:

- The Prophets ﷺ and their successors deliver and teach the message of Allah ﷻ in a clear and certain manner.
- They put the message of Allah ﷻ into practice in their daily lives.
- They perform miraculous actions with the permission of Allah ﷻ. These miracles prove that these Prophets ﷺ or Imāms ﷺ are not liars or imposters, but are truly sent by Allah ﷻ.

If a community disbelieves in Allah ﷻ and fails to follow His instructions, then they cannot use the excuse of the message not being clear, or not having a person they could follow. Allah ﷻ refers to the concept of the Prophets ﷺ being a Proof, or a *Ḥujjah*, in this verse:

> "[We sent] Apostles, as bearers of good news and warners, so that humankind may not have any argument (Ḥujjah) against Allah, after the [sending of the] Apostles; and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." [1]

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was the 'Seal of the Prophets' (the final Messenger). Therefore, he is the *Ḥujjah* for all people who have lived since his time. This is because:

- His miracle—the Noble Qurʾān—is a universal miracle, not just for his time, but for all times and generations.
- We have access to know how he and his successors—the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—lived their lives and practiced the message of Islam.

His successors, the 12 Imāms ﷺ were the living Proofs of Allah ﷻ for each era they lived in, and the 12th Imām عجل الله فرجه is the living Proof of Allah ﷻ for our time.

WHY WE NEED PROPHETS ﷺ

Living in this world, we strive for happiness and success as human beings. In order to attain the highest degrees of happiness and success, Allah ﷻ has bestowed humankind with two tools: an inner guide (intellect), and an outer guide (the Prophets ﷺ).

Our intellect is capable of realizing some of the realities and truths in this world. However, the realities of the Hereafter, as well as some of the deeper realities of this world are beyond the scope of our intellect, especially when it is clouded by our desires and inclinations. Therefore, we need Prophets ﷺ who because of their purity have been given direct access to these realities by Allah ﷻ. They teach us about these realities and show us signs for their truth, and help us to live our lives according to these truths.

Prophets ﷺ are Guides

Whenever we are faced with a problem that we cannot solve, or something we do not know, then we need to turn to those who know, or those who have more experience than us and seek their advice. Think of how many times during the last week you asked your parents, teachers, or friends for help or advice, or googled how to do something? Similarly, whenever we are in need of guidance in matters related to our religion, we need guides, who because of their access to the wisdom and teachings given to them by Allah ﷻ, have the perfect advice for us in all situations.

Our life is a journey toward Allah ﷻ, and the Prophets ﷺ are the guides who show us where to go, and the best way to reach our destination—like a GPS on a road trip!

STOP AND REFLECT: Imagine traveling to a brand new place with no map or guide. How might you figure out where to go? Is this the most efficient way to travel? How is this similar to needing a guide to help us in our daily lives?

Prophets ﷺ Teach us our Duties toward Allah ﷻ

The Prophets ﷺ guide us on our journey by teaching us what our duties are toward Allah ﷻ—who is our Lord and Creator. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

"Surely, once a person knows that they have a Creator, then it is expected from them to also know that their Lord is pleased with certain things and displeased by other things. These things will not be understood except through revelation or through a Messenger. Thus, those who do not receive revelation should seek the knowledge from the Messengers (of Allah) for they are the Proofs of Allah, and their obedience is obligatory." [2]

The Best Life in this World and the Hereafter

As we discussed above, the Prophets ﷺ have direct access to the realities of knowledge. They are not like the scientists, economists, politicians, therapists, or psychologists of today who use their limited resources, knowledge, and sometimes guesswork to get as close to the truth as possible. Rather, Prophets ﷺ have access to the truth, as it is, in matters related to both the Hereafter and this world. Therefore, their presence amongst a community gives the people an opportunity to know how to improve their life—both in this world and the Hereafter.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 165.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 23, P.18.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ ... فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ ۙ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝

"Those who follow the Messenger…who believe in him, and honor him, and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, it is those who will be the successful ones."[3]

Prophets ﷺ are Free from Sins (Maʿṣūm):

We have already established two principles:

1. Prophets ﷺ are practical examples who we must follow.
2. Prophets ﷺ are our guides who tell us what Allah ﷻ wants from us.

These two principles necessitate that the Prophets ﷺ must not commit any sins, i.e., be *Maʿṣūm*. This will be our main point of discussion in this lesson.

Maʿṣūm means to be protected from sinning and errors by Allah ﷻ. This does not mean that they do not have the ability to sin. They are still human beings, have free will, and thus are able to sin. However, they have been given the ability to see the reality of sins, so they avoid them completely due to this knowledge. If we could see that when a group of people gossip they are literally 'eating' the flesh of the person they are talking about, then we would not even come close to such an act. One who is *maʿṣūm* can see exactly this, and therefore they avoid all sins.

Why did Allah ﷻ not give ordinary people this ability? In His infinite Knowledge, He knew that certain individuals would be strong in their will and commitment, and would choose not to sin in this world. These were the people who were chosen for the most difficult mission in this world—that of being a Prophet ﷺ, a successor, or an Imām ﷺ. Allah ﷻ blessed them with *ʿismah*—inerrancy from sins, and they were given this internal vision from the time they were born, because He knew that they would make full use of it, and other human beings needed these individuals as their guides.

Sometimes, it may be difficult to imagine how a human can be sinless. Hishām ibn Ḥakam was once asked what the sign of immaculateness is. He described all sins as being under one of four categories: greed, jealousy, anger, or desire. He further explained that greed cannot be possible for the Imāms ﷺ because they are the treasurers of all Muslims, and therefore have nothing to be greedy about. Human beings become jealous of those who are above them in one way or another, but there can be no one above an Imām ﷺ in anything—especially status, therefore they would never be jealous. It is also not possible for an Imām ﷺ to be angry about any worldly thing because their duty has been to establish the proper rights and limits, and demonstrating worldly anger would be failing to enact these.

Lastly, Allah ﷻ created them with love for the Hereafter, just as He created within us a desire for this world, therefore it is impossible for them to give in to worldly desires.[4]

This is the meaning of Divine protection or *ʿismah*.

We can see from this that the sinlessness of the Imāms ﷺ is not like that of the angels. Angels have no desire to sin, nor do they have the ability to do so; but, the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ have the ability to sin, but in each and every instance they choose not to do so.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verse 157.
4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī,* Vol. 1, P. 632.

WHY DO PROPHETS ﷺ NEED TO BE MAʿṢŪM?

Protecting the Revelation

If Prophets ﷺ could commit sins or make mistakes, then how would we know that they have not made a mistake or lied about the revelation? They are our only route of access to revelation, so if it is possible for them to lie or commit a mistake, then we have no guarantee that the revelation is in fact true. For example, if Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ ever lied, how could we have believed that the entire Qurʾān is true, and the actual word of Allah ﷻ?

So if Prophets ﷺ could have ever committed mistakes or sinned, then the whole point of sending any Messengers would be lost.

STOP AND REFLECT: Was there ever a time you had trouble trusting someone because of a previous mistake or choice they made in the past? What were your concerns about trusting them a second time?

Being True Guides

The Prophets ﷺ are guides for all of humanity, so if they commit sins or make mistakes, then people would have no reason to follow them. Again, this would defy the very purpose of their mission and message. Therefore, the Prophets ﷺ, and as an extension, the 12 Imāms ﷺ, must be sinless and free from any mistakes whatsoever, for the entirety of their life, in order for people to be able to trust them. Even before Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ became a Prophet, he was known as 'The Truthful One'—*aṣ-Ṣādiq,* and 'The Trustworthy One'—*al-Amīn*, which later helped people trust his words based on his perfect reputation.

The Prophet ﷺ used his previous good standing with the community as a proof against them. When he first announced his message, he went to the hill on the outskirts of Mecca, and asked his people: *"Have you ever known me to lie to you before?"* They answered: *"No!"* Then he proceeded to tell them: *"Would you believe me if I told you there was an enemy coming from behind the hills to attack you?"* They replied: *"Yes."* He then asked them to declare that there is no God or deity except Allah, and began to deliver his message.[5] If he had not been of immaculate character previously, he would not have been able to use this as a proof against the people.

Being Practical Role Models

As we established earlier, the Prophets ﷺ are practical role models of how the theoretical teachings should be applied. So, if they made mistakes or committed sins, then we would have no point of reference, and would not know how to apply the teachings of our religion. In other words, we would no longer have a point of reference to tell us what is right and what is wrong. For example, Allah ﷻ commands us to give charity. But how would we know how much charity to give, when to give it, and who it is most important to give our charity to? We learn all of this from the lifestyle of the Prophets ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ.

We also see that even though we have an internal sense of what is right and what is wrong, there is still so much disagreement among human beings as to what is moral and what is not. This is sometimes because people are influenced by their desires, or exploited by other people and their desires. Sometimes people do not know how to apply the moral truths that they know. If it was not for the example of how the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ lived their lives, then we would have no point of reference for morality.

5 Āyatullāh Subḥānī, *The Message*; Shaykh Tabarsī, *Tafsīr Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, Vol. 7, P. 323.

THE PROPHET ﷺ WAS AN IMMACULATE ROLE MODEL

Now that we have established the above principles, let us look at some examples of how Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ fulfilled the part of being a perfect role model for others.

The Prophet ﷺ never stated something or made an order, without applying it to himself first. First of all, it was because of his sincerity, and secondly, to give them a practical example of how to apply the teachings correctly. When the Muslims arrived in Medina, one of the first orders that the Prophet ﷺ gave was to construct a masjid. As the companions began to collect the stones to build the masjid, they were expecting the Prophet ﷺ to stand back and take a supervisory role. However, he refused to just watch his followers build it like a king usually does. He worked alongside his companions, gathering and carrying stones from one place to another. A companion by the name of Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr came to him and said: *"O Prophet of Allah! Permit me to carry this (a stone)."* The Prophet ﷺ thanked him and said: *"Go and bring another one."* In this manner, he showed a glimpse of his sublime character. He said: *"I am a practical man—a man of actions, not of words only."* [6]

Another example of the Prophet ﷺ practicing what he preached relates to generosity and charity. In the very early years of Islam, the Muslims were repeatedly ordered and encouraged by the Qurʾān and the Prophet ﷺ to sacrifice their own comfort so that they could give some charity and help other Muslims who did not have enough for the basic necessities of life. The Prophet ﷺ practiced this teaching to its highest degree. He would eat only the simplest foods. He stated that in the early years of Islam he would eat one day, and go hungry the next.[7] He would give whatever he had to those who needed it, or anyone who came asking at his door. This reached the extent where one day a young boy knocked at his door, but the Prophet ﷺ had nothing in his house to give him—no food, no money, no clothing. So the boy asked for the shirt that the Prophet ﷺ was wearing. The Prophet ﷺ closed the door, took off his shirt, and passed it to the boy from behind the door. For the next day or so, the Prophet ﷺ was not able to leave his house because he did not even have a shirt to wear! [8] After this occurrence, a verse was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ about practicing moderation in giving. However, it still shows the level of compassion that the Prophet ﷺ had for his community.

STOP AND REFLECT: What issues might come up in our own lives if we have or follow imperfect role models?

Muslims have a perfect example in Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and this is the way all of the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ of Allah ﷻ guided humanity—through their actions. In their worship; during times of peace; on the battlefield; amongst family members, whether they were good or bad; and in particular, their manners with people, they were the practical examples of excellence. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ describes Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ as follows:

"Certainly, in the Prophet of Allah, there was a sufficient example for you...You should follow your Prophet, the pure, and the chaste—may Allah bless him and his descendants. In him, was an example for the follower, and a consolation for the seeker of consolation. The most beloved person before Allah is the one who follows His Prophet, and treads his footsteps." [9]

6 Ibn Isḥāq, *Aṣl as-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah,* Vol. 1, P. 496.

7 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 16, Ch. 9.

8 Āyatullāh Khomeini, *Kashf al-Asrār,* Vol.5, P. 54.

9 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 158.

Activity 3.2b: Video Reflection

The video in side sidebar further describes some of the characteristics and attributes of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

1. Are there any new traits of the Prophet ﷺ that you learned from watching this video?

   _____

   _____

2. What are your personal character goals to try and follow the example of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ?

   _____

   _____

Character of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

http://bitly.ws/zXRi

INVITING OTHERS TO ISLAM THROUGH OUR ACTIONS

So far, we have come to realize that the Prophets ﷺ taught and spread Islam primarily through their actions. Today, we who identify ourselves as Muslims, and have Muslim names such as Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Ḥasan, Zaynab, Zahrāʾ, etc., must strive to be the best examples of our religion that we can be. If we are good examples of Muslims, then Islam will look good; but if we are bad examples of Muslims, then Islam will look bad.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about the meaning of your name. Are you named after a role model in Islam? If not, which role model would you choose to be named after, if you had the choice? How do you think you can live up to the potential of your name and/or the role model that you would choose to be named after?

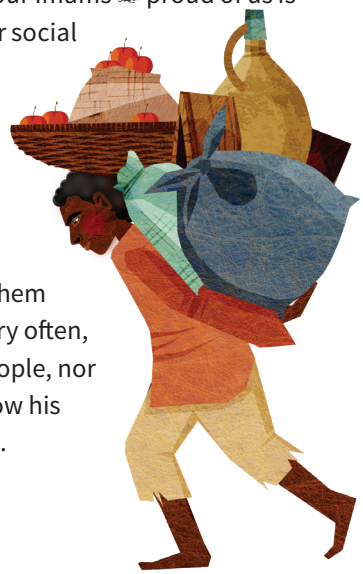
It is not enough for us to say that we are Muslims without acting on our words.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۝
كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۝

"O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful to Allah that you say that which you do not do." [10]

One of the best ways in which we can portray true Islam, and make Allah ﷻ, the Prophets ﷺ, and our Imāms ﷺ proud of us is to display good manners and proper social etiquette.



The last Prophet ﷺ—our highest example—was humble, kind, and compassionate; and he showed amazing subtlety when dealing with people's emotions, always making them feel comfortable. He would smile very often, and never insulted or humiliated people, nor treated them rudely. We should follow his examples, and tread in his footsteps.

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaff (61), Verses 2-3.

Activity 3.2c: Analyzing Situations

Imagine the following situations, and explain how the choice of action you make can influence others' opinion of you and Islam. Explain how each choice might lead someone to view Muslims, and Islam overall, especially in a place where someone may not be familiar with Islam. Explanations can be based on personal stories or hypothetical situations.

1. Letting someone into the line before you, vs. fighting over a spot in the line.

2. Replying to an insult with anger, vs. replying to an insult with kind words.

3. Holding the door open for someone, vs. ignoring them and walking through yourself.

4. Smiling at a person, vs. frowning at them.

5. Being humble with your teachers and respecting them, vs. being rude and arrogant toward them.

The following story serves as an example for us:

One day, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was sitting with a group of his companions in a house. The house was full, and there was no more room to sit anywhere. A person came to join the gathering, and since there was no room, he was about to sit on the ground outside of the door which did not have any carpet or cushion. When the Prophet ﷺ saw this, he took off his own robe, folded it, and threw it to that man so that he would have something to sit on. Of course, the man was so honored that he kissed the robe of the Prophet ﷺ rather than sitting on it.[11] This story shows how much the Prophet ﷺ cared about other people, and how careful he was not to hurt anyone's feelings.

When the Prophet ﷺ sat with his companions, he made sure to talk to all of them for an equal amount of time, and to even spread his eye contact among all of them equally. He would never prefer someone over another because they were rich, famous, or a leader of their people. When he shook hands with another man, he would never pull his hand away until the other person pulled away first. He would never end a conversation abruptly (unless for a religious reason), and would allow the other person to finish their conversation and ask their questions.

These were some of the great manners of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. We should emulate these great personalities in practicing our religion in all aspects of our daily lives, especially when it comes to our manners, and how we treat other people around us.

11 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 16, Ch. 9.

Activity 3.2d: Review Questions

1. The Prophet ﷺ always _____ what he _____.

2. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۝ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۝

"O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful to Allah that you say that which you do not do." [12]

Explain what this verse means to you in our own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaff (61), Verses 2-3.

Activity 3.2d: Review Questions (Continued)

3. What are some areas of knowledge that we cannot attain with our intellect, and for which we need guidance from the Prophets ﷺ or Imāms ﷺ?

4. Explain how the Prophets ﷺ were proofs for and against their communities.

5. Explain what it means to be *Maʿṣūm*.

6. Explain the meaning of *ʿiṣmah*.

Activity 3.2e: Scenarios

Read the following scenarios, and consider how you might act in them according to the manners of the Prophet ﷺ that we read about in this lesson.

1. You are talking with your friends before the class bell rings. Suddenly, someone new comes and tries to sit with you in the middle of your conversation. What should you do?

2. You are having a very rough day. Everything that could have gone wrong this morning went wrong. You snooze your alarm, there was no milk left for your cereal, you missed the bus, and you got soaked in the rain walking to school. Your friend sees you walking to the door, and runs up to say *salāmun ʿalaykum,* even though you just need a minute to gather yourself. How do you respond?

3. Come up with your own scenario from your life, and how you responded to it, vs. how you should have responded according to the example of the Prophet ﷺ.

3.3 Imāmah

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Discuss the meaning and necessity of *Imāmah.*
- Examine the characteristics of our Imāms ﷺ, and understand why they are necessary as leaders for the Muslim community.
- Demonstrate what it means to have love for the Imāms ﷺ through the examples of their companions.
- Further evidence for the need of Imāms ﷺ within our religion.

In this lesson, we will discuss the concept of *Imāmah*, as well as the importance of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

THE MEANING OF IMĀMAH

As we discussed in previous lessons, *Imāmah* literally means leadership. However, we use it more specifically to refer to the Divinely-appointed leaders: people who were appointed to lead the Muslim community by Allah ﷻ.

As Shīʿahs, we believe that the position of leadership for the Muslim community is one of the most important issues in Islam. Without the most qualified leader, the Muslim community would stray from the right path, and Islam itself would be compromised. When the Prophet ﷺ was alive, he was obviously the leader of the Muslim community. However, after his death, there was much dispute and controversy about this position.

Just like we need Prophets ﷺ to show us the path to Allah ﷻ and act as practical role models, we need Imāms ﷺ to guide us in the same way. Once the final Prophet's mission ended, there was a need for an Imām ﷺ to perform some of the functions that a Prophet ﷺ did, in order to protect the message and the mission. This leader, like the Prophets ﷺ, had to be Divinely-appointed, because if it were up to anyone else to choose this leader, then the wrong leader may have been chosen (as happened in history many times), and this would have slowly led the Muslim community in the wrong direction. Choosing a leader through consensus, voting, or the opinion of one or a group of elite individuals leaves room for error, and does not ensure that the correct and most qualified person will be appointed as a leader.

Unlike other Muslims, Shīʿahs believe that Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ would not leave anyone without a leader who was chosen and appointed by Allah ﷻ. In fact, we believe that Allah ﷻ instructed His Prophet ﷺ to appoint 12 successors, each of whom in turn would lead the Muslim community.[1] It is impossible that the Prophet ﷺ, who instructed the Muslims on the smallest of issues, such as which side to sleep on, and which foot to walk in and out of the bathroom with, would not instruct them on who will be the leader—the Imām ﷺ—after himself.

There is a significant amount of documented historical evidence for this from all Muslim sects, alongside evidence from the Qurʾān itself, and logical reasoning as seen above.[2]

1 Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) said: "The Imāms (leaders) after me are 12, so whoever loves and follows them will attain success and salvation, and whoever refrains from (following) them has strayed and erred." Āyatullāh Ṣāfī Gulpaygānī, *Muntakhab al-Athar fī al-Imām ath-Thānī ʿAshar,* P. 28.

2 For further reference, please see the following works that are useful for learning factual information about our belief in the Imamate, and the differences between the Shīʿah belief and that of other sects:
- Tījānī, Muḥammad, *Then I was Guided.*
- Mūsawī, Sharaf ad-Dīn, *Al-Murājaʿāt.*
- Mūsawī, Sharaf ad-Dīn, *An-Naṣṣ wal-Ijtihād.*
- Shīrāzī, Muḥammad al-Mūsawī al-, *Peshawar Nights.*

THE 12 IMĀMS ﷺ

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ appointed 12 Imāms ﷺ after himself. The first of them was Imām ʿAlī ﷺ; and the last of them is Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, who is still alive today. He was born over 1200 years ago, and lives in occultation. We will have further discussions on Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ in future lessons. The Prophet ﷺ: "The Imāms (leaders) after me are 12, all of whom are from Quraysh." [3] In another narration, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him:

> "There are 12 Divine leaders after me. O ʿAlī, You are the first one; and the last one is al-Qāʾim, with whose hands Allah, the Blessed and All-High, will conquer the East and the West of the Earth." [4]

THE IMĀMS ARE DIVINELY PROTECTED FROM SINS (MAʿṢŪM)

One of our major beliefs is that the Imāms ﷺ, just like the Prophets ﷺ, were sinless and immaculate *(maʿṣūm)*. We discussed in previous lessons how the Prophets ﷺ were sinless, and why they must be free from committing any sins. We also refuted objections against this belief. To quickly recap:

- We need a guide and example to follow, and the Imāms ﷺ are the greatest role models along with the Prophets ﷺ. If they were not sinless, then we would have no point of reference to check our actions against.
- Secondly, if they were not sinless, then we would not be sure that what they are telling us is in fact the command of Allah ﷻ or otherwise, as they could be lying. This would undermine the very foundations of our faith.

The Imāms ﷺ choose not to sin because of the special Divine protection that Allah ﷻ blessed them with. This Divine protection was blessed upon them because Allah ﷻ knew in His infinite Knowledge that they would have earned it eventually. Allah ﷻ states in the Qurʾān that He chooses specific people for the position of Imām ﷺ, and that He inspires these Imāms ﷺ to do good actions, and the guidance that they provide to people is always inspired by the Almighty Himself.

3 Muntakhab al-Athar fī al-Imām ath-Thāni ʿAshar, P. 24.

4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā, Ḥadīth #34.

He says:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ ۝

"And We made them leaders (Imāms), guiding them by Our Command; and We inspired them, the doing of good deeds, and establishing the prayers, and the giving of charity; and they were worshipers of Us." [5]

STOP AND REFLECT: Have you ever read about an error or a mistake that was committed by a contemporary leader (national or international)? Did it change how you looked at this leader, or how you might look at this figure down the road? Explain.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IMĀMS ﷺ

In addition to being *maʿṣūm*, the Imām ﷺ of a Muslim community must have the following characteristics:

1. The highest level of faith:

It is unanimously agreed that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ never prostrated before any idol,[6] whereas others such as: Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān, indisputably all worshiped idols at some time in their lives. Eight years had passed since the rise of Islam, and ʿUmar (the second caliph) was still an idolater! Even after embracing Islam, he would often question the Prophet's decisions, and cast doubts on them on various occasions. One example of this can be seen in the events surrounding the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. The Prophet ﷺ had a dream that the Muslims would perform *Ḥajj,* so they all set out toward Mecca. Before they reached there, the Quraysh confronted them in an aggressive manner, so the Prophet ﷺ then decided to enter into a treaty with them rather than engage in war. Thus, the Muslims had to stop their journey to Mecca, and the Prophet ﷺ asked them to shave their heads, and slaughter their animals of sacrifice, for they were going to *Ḥajj* that year. ʿUmar was very upset by this, and would not stop objecting to the Prophet's decision, and even personally confronted the Prophet ﷺ. However, the Prophet ﷺ told him that he had promised they will go to *Ḥajj*, but not that year.[7]

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verse 73.

6 Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbdullāh, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, Vol. 15, P. 20.

7 *An-Naṣṣ wal-Ijtihād,* Pp.198-202.

2. The highest level of knowledge:

This is also necessary for a leader of the Muslim community. In the below verse:

"Say: 'Are those who know equal to those who know not?'" [8]

Allah ﷻ clearly states that one of the traits that gives merit to an individual is when they possess true knowledge, which is knowledge about Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet ﷺ said about Imām ʿAlī ؑ:

> "I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate. Whoever wishes to enter the city should enter it from its gate." [9]

In contrast to this, ʿUmar would often be corrected in his Islamic understanding. Examples include the time when a woman stood up in the masjid one day to correct ʿUmar's ruling on dowries; and when Imām ʿAlī ؑ stopped a woman from being wrongly executed due to ʿUmar's mistake.

One day, ʿUmar became upset about the rising dowries within the Muslim community, so he ordered that there should be an upper limit on the dowry. A woman stood up in the crowd, and quoted the verse: *"...and if you had given her a heap of gold"* [10] which clearly shows that it is permissible to give a woman a large dowry. Thus, ʿUmar was clearly mistaken in his ruling, and he had to admit this.[11]

One day, Imām ʿAlī ؑ saw a mentally ill woman being prepared for execution. He inquired why this was happening, and they told him that she had committed adultery so she was being punished. He stopped all of the proceedings, and brought the woman before ʿUmar. He then reminded ʿUmar about a narration which says that the pen (i.e. responsibility) is lifted off from those who are mentally ill (among others), so she cannot be punished. Again, ʿUmar admitted his mistake, and confessed that if it were not for the guidance and advice of Imām ʿAlī ؑ, he would have perished.[12]

3. The best in jihād:

This is another necessity of leadership mentioned in the Qurʾān:

"Allah has preferred in grades those who strive hard, and fight with their wealth and their lives over those who remain (behind)." [13]

There is no doubt that no one came close to Imām ʿAlī ؑ and his progeny in this category. The examples of the Battles of Uḥud and Khaybar are two of the most famous.

4. Karāmāt:

All of our Imāms ؑ performed miracles in one form or another. Miracles performed by the Imāms ؑ are called *karāmāt*.

5. Exalted character:

All of our Imāms ؑ have the highest level of etiquette and manners which they learned directly from the Noble Prophet ﷺ. They practiced and taught *Makārim al-Akhlāq* (the noblest of moral traits).

6. Justice:

The Imāms ؑ all practiced and taught the highest forms of justice.

Unfortunately, because of these very characteristics, all our Imāms ؑ were mistreated by a certain segment of the population. Many were imprisoned for extended periods of time, and all of the first 11 Imāms ؑ were eventually killed. The tyrant rulers around them had immense jealousy, hatred, and malice toward them, and feared that their power would be challenged by the Imāms ؑ and their followers. The major enemies of the Imāms ؑ were usually hypocrites: people who pretended to be Muslims and care about Islam, but who in reality, only had their own personal interests in mind.

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 9.

9 *Duʿāʾ an-Nudbah.*

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 20.

11 Nasāʾī, Aḥmad ibn Shuʿayb, *As-Sunan an-Nasāʾī*, Vol. 7, P. 233; Muttaqī Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl*, Vol. 8, P. 298.

12 Sijistānī, Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Vol. 2, P. 227; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Vol. 2, P. 227; Nayshābūrī, Ḥākim al-, *Al-Mustadrak ʿalā aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Vol. 2, P. 59; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* Vol. 6, P. 2499.

13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 95.

THE IMĀMS ﷺ WERE NOT CHOSEN BY PEOPLE

It is important to understand that the Imāms ﷺ were not chosen by people through election. Rather, they were chosen by Allah ﷻ because they possessed the above characteristics. It is only Allah ﷻ who can make this appointment and give such a position to someone. According to the Noble Qurʾān, even Prophets ﷺ did not appoint their own successors. When Prophet Mūsā ﷺ wanted a successor to help him in his mission, he requested Allah ﷻ to appoint his brother, Hārūn ﷺ, as his successor, which Allah ﷻ then accepted, but he did not just appoint one himself.[14] Similarly, when Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ was appointed as an Imām ﷺ, he did not choose his successor; instead, he asked Allah ﷻ to choose successors from his offspring.[15]

Throughout history, when people were appointed or chosen through an election, they made major mistakes that led to disastrous consequences for the Muslim community. We also see how many so-called 'world leaders' today—who are at least at a superficial level elected by people—make decisions that end up harming the majority of human beings.

THE STATUS OF THE AHLUL BAYT ﷺ

Part of our belief in *Imāmah* is that of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ and their great status. 'Ahlul Bayt' literally means 'People of the Household,' but it is a specific Qurʾānic term referring to certain members of the household of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. These people are:

- Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself
- Imām ʿAli ﷺ (his cousin and son-in-law)
- Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ (his daughter)
- Imām Ḥasan ﷺ (his grandson)
- Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ (his grandson)[16]

In the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says the following about the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ۝

"Allah only desires to keep away from you any impurity, O People of the House (Ahlul Bayt), and purify you with a (thorough) purification." [17]

In this verse, Allah ﷻ clearly states that He has removed all impurities from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and He confirms that they are immaculate and protected from any sins due to His Divine protection.[18] This is the sinlessness *(ʿiṣmah)* that has been discussed earlier.

14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verses 29-36.

15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 124.

16 As an extension, the term Ahlul Bayt ﷺ also includes the other nine Imāms ﷺ—up to the 12th Imām, Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ—who came from the lineage of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ.

17 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 33.

18 ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, discussion of Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 33.

There are discussions about who this verse applies to. However, numerous narrations found in both Shīʿah and Sunnī books of narration, indicate clearly that this verse refers to the five people listed above.[19]

Now that we know that the Noble Qurʾān confirms that the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ are sinless, immaculate, have a special Divine protection, and a great status in the eyes of Allah ﷻ, let us look at what type of relationship we should have with the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AHLUL BAYT ﷺ

As we mentioned, the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ are sinless. Therefore, they are perfect examples and role models that we should follow in all aspects of our life, if we want to save ourselves from straying from the right path, and getting closer to Allah ﷻ. In fact, the Noble Prophet ﷺ said (and this has been narrated from multiple Sunnī and Shīʿah chains of narration) that:

"The likeness of my Ahlul Bayt among my followers (ummah) is similar to Nūḥ's Ark. Those who embark on it are saved, and those who reject it will be perished." [20]

Not only are we urged to follow the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ and to hold on to them as role models and guides, but we are also expected to build a deep love for them in ourselves and our families. Love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ is not only a form of worship, but it is one of the highest forms.

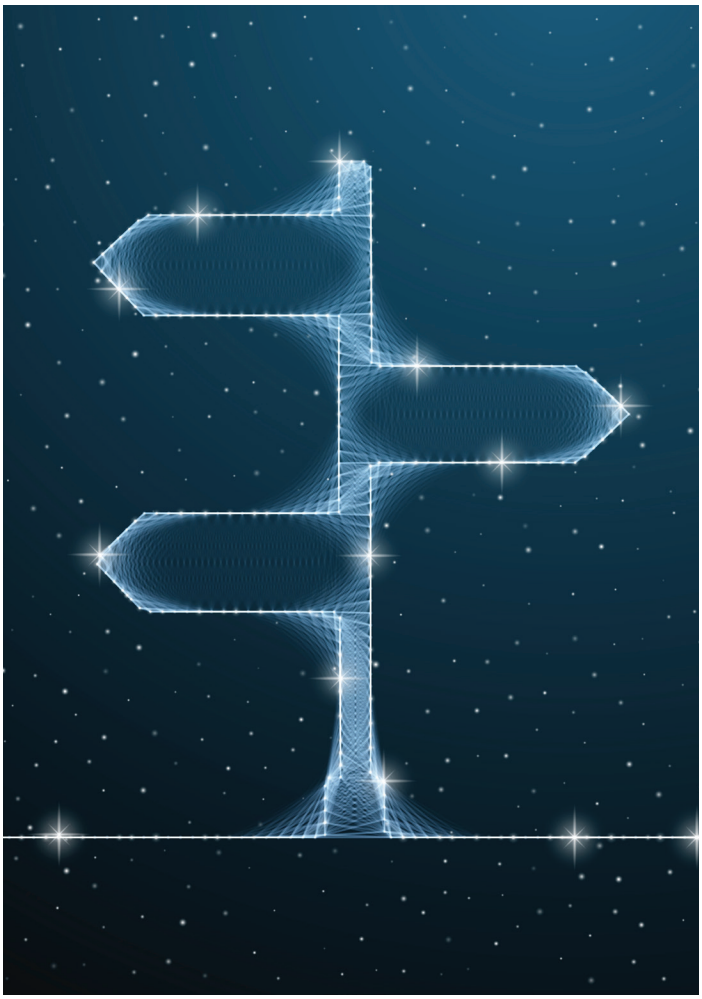
Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ says: *"Surely, there are various degrees of serving Allah, but affection (deep love) for us, the Ahlul Bayt, is the highest one."* [21]

This is because if we love the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, then we will naturally incline toward following their example and being more like them, and since they are the most perfect human beings who are the closest to Allah ﷻ, we will also try to become better servants of the Almighty.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some ways in which we can demonstrate our love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ?

Love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ can manifest itself in a number of various ways:

- Taking them as role models and following them
- Learning the knowledge that they passed on to us
- Obeying them in all matters
- Loving those who love them, and disassociating ourselves from the actions and lifestyle of those who show enmity toward them



19 Other schools of thought indicate that it may be referring to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ because the above expression comes in the context of a few verses which are speaking about the wives. However, this opinion is clearly incorrect for many reasons, some of which include the following: This verse uses the expression *''ankum'* which in Arabic refers either to the masculine tense, or a group of people which includes male members. Therefore, it cannot refer to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. If it was referring to them, then the expression used would have been *''ankunna.'* There are a great number of narrations that indicate that this verse was revealed about the five individuals mentioned above. These traditions are narrated through both Sunnī and Shīʿah chains of narration. In fact, the Sunnī chains of narration are greater in number, and they amount to more than forty; Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 187.

20 Naysābūrī, Ḥākim, *Al-Mustadrak ʿalā aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn,* Vol. 3, P. 163.

21 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥar al-Anwār*, Vol. 27, P. 91.

Activity 3.3a: Reflection

1. How do you think you can manifest love for Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in your own life?

2. Think of the examples above, and explain how they reflect true love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.
   - Taking them as role models and following them
   - Learning the knowledge that they passed on to us
   - Obeying them in all matters
   - Loving those who love them, and disassociating ourselves from the actions and lifestyle of those who show enmity toward them

EXAMPLES OF LOVE FOR THE AHLUL BAYT ﷺ

Let us look at some historical examples of individuals who demonstrated tremendous love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, so that we can get a better understanding of what we mean by love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

Muslim ibn ʿAwsajah and Ḥabīb ibn Maẓāhir

These two men were among the closest companions of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ. They had a close relationship with the Imām ﷺ since they were young children, and they had fought alongside Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.

They were loyal, trusted, and tried companions. When Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was heading toward Kūfah, they saw that everyone in their city was betraying him, and instead of supporting him as they had promised, the Kūfans were preparing to fight against him. Muslim and Ḥabīb decided to leave Kūfah in secrecy, and join Imām Ḥusayn's small army. Kūfah was surrounded by the enemy's troops, but Ḥabīb and Muslim found a way out of there. These men had spent their entire lives struggling alongside the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. They left their families, homes, and belongings, knowing very well that they would never return back to them, but willingly performing their duty to fight one last battle alongside their beloved Imām ﷺ.

Once they reached Karbalāʾ, they were among the first to step out into the battlefield and die in order to protect Islam and their rightful Imām ﷺ. Muslim ibn ʿAwsajah went to battle before Ḥabīb, and was mortally wounded. Ḥabīb and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ rushed toward Muslim, and sat near him as he was breathing his last. Ḥabīb said to Muslim: *"O Muslim, it is so difficult for me to see you like this, but receive the glad tidings of Paradise!"*

Muslim replied: *"May Allah give you glad tidings too, my brother Ḥabīb."*

To this, Ḥabīb responded: *"If I did not know that I was going to follow you quickly (to my own death), then I would have loved for you to ask me to do whatever you wish after your death."*

At this point, Muslim pointed to Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and simply said: *"I ask you to take care of this man."*

Ḥabīb replied: *"By the Lord of the Kaʿbah, I will do so."* [22]

Even in his final moments of life, all that Muslim cared about was the Imām ﷺ. This is the peak of love for Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

Maytham at-Tammār

Maytham was one of the special students of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. He was a very close companion of the Imām ﷺ, and the Imām ﷺ shared a lot of his knowledge with Maytham. One day, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ called Maytham and said to him: *"What will you do when an evil man will be put into power by the Banū Umayyah, and he will summon and ask you to disassociate yourself from me?"*

Maytham said: *"O Commander of the faithful! By Allah, I shall never disassociate myself from you."*

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ then said: *"In that case, you will be killed and hanged on the gallows."*

Maytham replied: *"By Allah, I shall be patient, this is not much in the way of Allah."*

Many years after Imām ʿAlī ﷺ passed away, and just before the events of Karbalāʾ occurred, Maytham was summoned by Ibn Ziyād, the tyrant ruler of Kūfah, who had been put in power by Yazīd.

Ibn Ziyād was told that Maytham was one of the most beloved friends and devoted companions of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. As the Imām ﷺ had predicted, Ibn Ziyād ordered Maytham to disassociate himself from Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and to speak evil of him. Maytham refused, and instead answered Ibn Ziyād with more praise of the Imām ﷺ. He was first imprisoned, then hung on the gallows, and left there for days to die. Even while he was in this state, he would call people to come closer to him, and would speak to them about the virtues of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. He kept on doing this up until the last hours of his life. Toward the end, he was violently killed by the soldiers of Ibn Ziyād, thus he died for the sake of his religion, and in the intense love of the rightful leaders of Islam, the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.[23]

STOP AND REFLECT: Consider the examples above of the companions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. What kind of characteristics/traits do you think allowed them to remain patient in such hard times?

22 Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *Nafas al-Mahmūm*, Ch.19.

23 *Nafas al-Mahmūm*, Ch. 9.

Activity 3.3b: Research

Research another loyal companion of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Give a brief summary of their life, and how they demonstrated love toward the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Be sure to include the following:

- Which member(s) of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ they were a close companion of
- A narration or story depicting their loyalty
- How they were in the final moments of their lives

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

al-islam.org/shiite-encyclopedia/respecting-righteous-companions

al-islam.org/library/companions

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF IMĀMAH

The concept of '*Imāmah*' or Divine Leadership is so significant in Islam that Allah ﷻ says that on the Day of Judgment, He will call on every nation by their Imām or leader (i.e. the one they accepted as their leader).[24] Allah ﷻ gives the people of Pharaoh as an example. They accepted the misguided leadership of Pharaoh, and because of this, the Qurʾān states that on the Day of Judgment, they will be forced to follow Pharaoh into the Hellfire.[25]

We see that people today, and throughout history have agreed to be led by evil doers and tyrants, such as Pharaoh, Muʿāwiyah, etc. The Qurʾān teaches us that this will have the most dire consequences for these people in the Hereafter.

In contrast, we who identify ourselves as Shīʿah Muslims choose the very best of Allah's creations—the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—as our leaders, and we follow their path. We hope that this means that on the Day of Judgment, they will take us along with them into Paradise.

One of the lessons that can be learned from this is that we should not (out of fear or anything else) allow tyrants similar to Pharaoh lead us into the fire of Hell, and the permanent punishment of Allah ﷻ. The Almighty warns us to NOT incline toward the wrong doers or tyrants. Rather, we must resist this, like Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ did. He refused to give allegiance or face humiliation in front of an evil tyrant like Yazīd. Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ said: *"Disgrace is far from us, the Ahlul Bayt."* [26]

24 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 71.

25 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ghāfir (40), Verse 46.

26 Ṭabarsī, Abū Manṣūr, *Al-Iḥtitāj*, Vol. 2, P. 300.

Activity 3.3c: Review Questions

1. The Imāms ﷺ chose not to sin because:

   a. They were taught better.
   b. They had special Divine protection that Allah ﷻ provided them with.
   c. They were inspired by Allah ﷻ.

2. Love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ can be shown by:

   a. Taking them as role models.
   b. Loving those who love them, and disassociating with those who show enmity toward them
   c. Learning from them and their examples.
   d. All of the above.

3. If the Imāms ﷺ were not _____, we would have no point of reference to check our own _____ against.

4. Ahlul Bayt ﷺ literally means _____.

5. Who does the term Ahlul Bayt ﷺ specifically refer to?

6. Discuss some of the qualities that a Divinely-appointed Imām ﷺ must have.

7. Why do you think the qualities of the Imāms ﷺ resulted in others around them treating them badly?

RESEARCH TASK: Find other evidence from the narrations of the Prophet ﷺ confirming the 12 Imāms ﷺ and their identity. Write a short essay sharing your findings.

Activity 3.3c: Research Task (Rubric)

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes in the essay.
Focus and Details	The topic and main ideas were not clear.	Main idea was somewhat clear, but lacked supporting evidence.	The main idea was very clear, however supporting evidence and details were lacking.	There was a clear and focused main idea supported by ample detail and evidence.
Voice/Intent	Author's voice/intent of writing was not apparent.	Author's voice/intent was somewhat apparent, but left the audience with many questions.	Author's voice/intent was strong with a clear purpose, but still left the audience with some questions.	Author's voice and knowledge on the topic was very strong, and fully addressed all of the questions of the readers.
Accuracy	Content presented was not accurate or compelling.	Content presented contained much misinformation, and lacked quality.	Content presented was mostly accurate, but still demonstrated quality work.	Content presented was extremely compelling and accurate.

RESEARCH AID

al-islam.org/verses-ghadir/2-prophet-s-foretells-about-twelve-imams

asksthesheikh.com/did-the-prophet-s-really-say-there-will-be-12-caliphs-after-him-sunni-references/

al-islam.org/shiah-are-real-ahlul-sunnah-muhammad-al-tijani-al-samawi/prophet-appointed-imams-shias

3.4 Shafāʿah and Tawassul

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define *tawassul* and *shafāʿah.*
- Respond to objections about *shafāʿah.*
- Determine why Allah ﷻ has allowed intercession as a means of growing our faith *(īmān).*

Activity 3.4a: Pre-Reading Reflection

What first comes to mind when you think of the words *shafāʿah* and *tawassul*? Have you heard these terms before? If so, in what context?

INTERCESSION (SHAFĀʿAH) AND SEEKING HELP (TAWASSUL)

As we discussed in our previous lesson, the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have a very high status, given to them by Allah ﷻ. Part of this amazing status are the following two rights:

Allah ﷻ ordered us to seek His help through the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

We call this *tawassul*, which literally means 'to seek closeness to someone or something by means of an intermediary.' This is mentioned in the following verse of the Noble Qurʾān:

"O you who believe! Be God-conscious (pious) and seek the means (of closeness) to Him." [1]

Allah ﷻ gave them the right to intercede with Him on our behalf

in order to avoid harm (like the punishment of the Fire), and/or gain benefit (like the rewards of Paradise); and we call this *shafāʿah*, which literally means 'intercession.' This is mentioned in the following verse of the Noble Qurʾān:

"On that Day, no intercession shall avail except the one for whom the All-Merciful (Allah) has given permission, and whose word is acceptable to Him." [2]

These two concepts are closely related, because *shafāʿah*—intercession is a type of *tawassul*—intermediary that usually refers to seeking the help of pure individuals in the Hereafter; whereas *tawassul* usually refers to seeking help from these individuals in this world. For the rest of this lesson, we will refer to both of them using the term "intercession."

One analogy for intercession is that if a person wants to visit a king or a leader of a nation that they have no access to, then they will ask someone whom the king respects—such as a minister or a governor—to speak to the king and intercede for this person, so that the king will agree to see them. Sometimes, when we want to ask Allah ﷻ for something, He is veiled from us due to our sins, thus He instructs us to ask Him through intercessors who have a special right with Him because of their high status. These intercessors are: the Prophets ﷺ, the 12 Imāms ﷺ, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, and other select, righteous individuals. Other intercessors include the Noble Qurʾān, holy sites, places, and certain lands, and other things which Allah ﷻ has given special significance to.

The majority of Muslims believe in intercession. The only exception are some extreme sects that fail to understand it. We will discuss some of the objections against intercession and seeking help through the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ in the following section and answer these queries.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 35.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verse 109.

STOP AND REFLECT: Is there something you would like the Imāms ﷺ or Prophets ﷺ to ask Allah ﷻ on your behalf?

OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST INTERCESSION

OBJECTION 1: Is intercession not an act of polytheism (shirk)?

This is one of the major objections against intercession. Some people claim that we are asking for something from someone other than Allah ﷻ, and therefore we are performing an act of polytheism. This objection is already answered in the way that intercession was defined above. We are asking Allah ﷻ, and Allah ﷻ **alone**, but by the *means* of an intercessor. We **do not** believe that the Prophets ﷺ, Imāms ﷺ, or other intercessors have any independent power besides Allah ﷻ. This is why we call them 'intercessors.' We simply believe that their prayers and supplications are more readily accepted than ours, so we ask Allah ﷻ through them.

For example, we see in the below verse that Allah ﷻ says that there are two conditions for believers to be forgiven by Allah ﷻ when they make a mistake. The first is that they seek Allah's forgiveness directly; and the second is that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ seeks forgiveness for them.

This shows that the Messenger ﷺ here acts as an intercessor or an intermediary.

"...And had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you (O Muḥammad) and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger had (also) asked forgiveness for them, then they would have found Allah Ever-Pardoning, All-Merciful." [3]

In addition to this, the intercessors that we turn to have been authorized by Allah ﷻ Himself (as we will prove soon). He commands us to seek His help through them. We do not choose them randomly or senselessly like the Arabs during the Age of Ignorance who took idols as intercessors.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some examples in our everyday lives when we ask someone (without independent power) to help us in a situation?

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 64.

OBJECTION 2: Does the Qurʾān not prohibit intercession?

There are a number of verses in the Qurʾān that seem, at first glance, to say that intercession is not allowed or that it is useless. Here are some examples:

"So the intercession of the intercessors shall not avail them." [4]

"O you who believe! Spend out of that which We have given you before the Day comes when there will be no bargaining, neither any friendship, nor intercession; and the unbelievers—they are the unjust ones." [5]

Although at first glance, these verses seem to give the impression that intercession is prohibited, useless, or even non-existent, when we look at the entire Qurʾān, we see that these verses are saying that intercession is only useless in some situations, such as when disbelievers or oppressors seek intercession through means that Allah ﷻ has not allowed or authorized. Let us look at certain other the verses which prove that intercession is valid, as long as it is authorized by Allah ﷻ:

> "…there is no intercessor except after His permission; that is Allah, your Lord..." [6]

"On that Day, no intercession shall avail except the one for whom the All-Merciful (Allah) gives permission, and whose word is acceptable to Him." [7]

As can be seen from these verses, once Allah ﷻ gives His permission to an intercessor to intercede, then their intercession will be useful and allowed.

Let us look at another verse related to this topic:

"And they shall not have any intercessors from among their partners (that they joined with Allah), and they will then be deniers (disbelievers) of their partners (associate-gods)." [8]

This verse shows that the non-permissible form of intercession is when people believe that their intercessors have independent powers besides Allah ﷻ, and consider these intercessors to be 'gods.' This type of seeking intercession is polytheism, and is not allowed.

We can see from this brief look at these verses of the Qurʾān dealing with intercession that intercession through those who are authorized by Allah ﷻ is permitted and even recommended, as long as we do not attribute any independent power to our intercessors.

Intercession through those who are authorized by Allah ﷻ is permitted as long as we do not attribute any independent power to our intercessors.

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muddaththir (74), Verse 48.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 254.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 3.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verse 109.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verse 13.

OBJECTION 3: Is intercession limited to the Hereafter?

Another objection that some individuals bring forth is that intercession may in fact be useful and allowed, but it only applies to the Hereafter; and that in this world, the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ cannot help us because they have passed away.

We can answer this objection by showing many examples from the Noble Qurʾān, where people came to the Prophets ﷺ to ask them to beg Allah ﷻ for forgiveness on their behalf. For example:

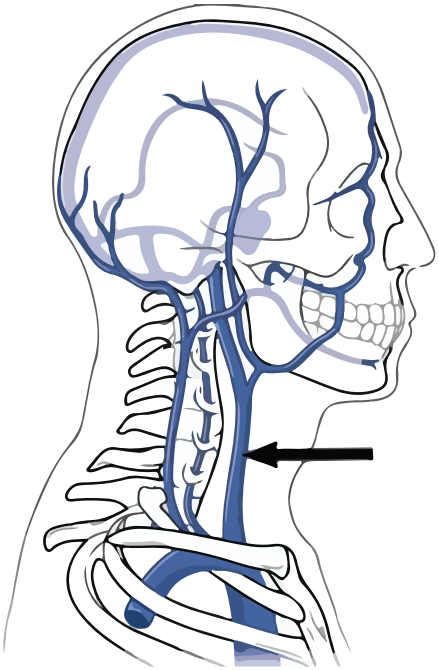
- The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ asked their father to seek forgiveness for them after they had hurt their father and brother.[9]
- Allah ﷻ commanded the Prophet ﷺ to seek forgiveness for his companions.[10] If this was useless, then why would Allah ﷻ have commanded the Prophet ﷺ to do it?
- In another verse of the Qurʾān,[11] Allah ﷻ makes His own forgiveness conditional upon the Prophet ﷺ asking forgiveness for his people. This verse shows that not only is intercession permissible, but sometimes it is even necessary. A story that highlights this is the following:

  On the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, when Ḥurr ibn Yazīd ar-Riyāḥī finally decided that he will not prefer anything to Paradise, even if he is burnt alive, he rode his horse toward Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ with his head lowered in shame before the family of the Prophet ﷺ. He raised his voice and pleaded: "O Allah, to You I turn back, so please forgive me, for I brought fear into the hearts of Your beloved ones and the children of your Prophet." Then he addressed the Imām ﷺ and said: "O Abā Abdillāh, I am repentant, so will you forgive me?" Ḥurr realised that just like the Prophet's permission was needed for the repentance of the Prophet's companions to be accepted; similarly, the permission of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was needed for his own repentance to be accepted. Thus he asked for the Imām ﷺ to forgive him so that Allah ﷻ may forgive him.

The other remaining point from this objection is this: The Prophet ﷺ has now passed away, so how can we seek his intercession before the Day of Judgment? The answer is that even though he has "physically" passed away, his influence remains because he is alive in the presence of His Lord, being given his sustenance. Part of the Prophet's sustenance—as indicated by the narrations—is the right to intercede for his community.

> "And do not consider those who are killed in the way of Allah as dead; no, they are alive with their Lord, being provided sustenance (from Him)." [12]

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 97.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 159.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 64.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 169.



OBJECTION 4:
Why do we need intercessors when Allah ﷻ is so close to us?

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"And We are closer to them than their jugular vein;"* [13] and *"And know that Allah intervenes between a person and their heart."* [14]

If Allah ﷻ is so near, then why do we need intercessors?

The response to this question is that although Allah ﷻ is always near us, we are sometimes far away from Him. In other words, if we look at things from Allah's point of view, He is always closer to us than our own jugular vein; however, if we look at things from our point of view, we are sometimes very far from Him. This is because our sins veil Him from us. Allah ﷻ clearly states in the Qurʾān that if people follow their desires, then this will cause veils to be placed on their heart:

> "Have you seen those who take their lower desires as their god, Allah lets them go astray knowingly, and (He) sets a seal upon their hearing, and their heart, and puts a cover over their vision…" [15]

These veils make Allah ﷻ distant from us. One of the reasons that we seek intercession through the Prophets ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ is because these veils do not exist for them, because they are absolutely pure, sinless, and immaculate. Therefore, in order to overcome these veils that we created by following our desires, we seek their assistance and intercession.

Even if we feel that our sins have put veils on our hearts, we are still commanded to call upon Allah ﷻ directly, as we do in our prayers. But seeking intercession is another method of calling Him, where in effect, we are telling Allah ﷻ: "O Allah! I accept that my heart is impure because of my sins, but for the sake of this pure individual whom You have honored, please cover the effects of my sins and allow me to come close to You!"

13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Qāf (50), Verse 16.
14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 24.
15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Jāthiyah (45), Verse 23.

Another reason why we turn to these individuals and seek Allah ﷻ through them is that doing so makes us humble ourselves in front of them. We recognize that they are our masters and leaders, and that we have to obey them and take them as our role models.

STOP AND REFLECT: In a previous lesson, we learned about *an-Nafs al-ʾAmmārah*—the soul that makes us give into our lower desires. How does this connect to the concept of *shafāʿah*? How can what we learned about controlling this desire help us when we seek intercession?

In the material world around us, Allah ﷻ commands us to seek certain means to reach our goals, even though He is very close to us, and can give us what we want instantly and directly. For example, if a person wants to become a highly qualified expert in a particular branch of science, then in addition to praying to Allah ﷻ to give them success, they also need to work toward their goal through the usual means of study, reading, and gaining experience. Similarly, Allah ﷻ has given us the spiritual means of the intercession of the Prophets ﷺ and Imām ﷺ in order to reach the goal of having our needs answered by Allah ﷻ and gaining closeness to Him.

The following is a short video further explaining the concept of intercession *(shafāʿah)*.

al-islam.org/kids-corner/intercession-resurrection-lesson-12

CONCLUSION

Seeking the intercession of the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ is permissible, and sometimes necessary in order to attain closeness to Allah ﷻ. The type of intercession that is refuted in the Noble Qurʾān is seeking the intercession of idols or other beings who have not been given the authority by Allah ﷻ to intercede with Him. Intercession is not an act of polytheism or attributing partners to Allah ﷻ, but rather a means of getting close to Him in a way that He has prescribed.

Activity 3.4b: Explaining Shafāʿah

As noted above, the concept of intercession is one that is often misunderstood. For this activity, you will first work independently, then with a group to discuss how to explain the concept of *shafāʿah*.

5 minutes: Reflect, and write down some ideas you have on how you would explain this concept of *shafāʿah* to your group.

3 minutes: Find all the other students in your class with the same group—this is now your expert group! Once you are in your group, each student will have one role: Discussion leader, recorder who will take notes, researcher who will go through everyone's notes and summarize them, and a presenter.

15 minutes: With your expert group, discuss ideas, thoughts, and questions. As a group, come up with a short presentation or skit demonstrating how you hope to explain the concept of intercession.

It is as if you are explaining the concept of *shafāʿah* to the following groups of individuals:

- **Group 1:** Your younger sibling.
- **Group 2:** An atheist neighbor or acquaintance.
- **Group 3:** A Muslim friend who does not accept the concept of intercession.

Activity 3.4c: Review Questions

1. *Tawassul* means:

   a. intercession
   b. seeking an intermediary
   c. asking for help

2. *Shafāʿah* means:

   a. intercession
   b. seeking an intermediary
   c. asking for help

3. Someone tells you that intercession is an act of polytheism *(shirk)*. How will you respond to them?

4. There are a number of verses in the Qurʾān that seem to say that intercession is not allowed, or at least that it is useless. How would you respond to a person who makes this statement?

5. Explain why we need intercessors when Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"And we are closer to them than their jugular vein."* [16]

16 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Qāf (50), Verse 16.

CHAPTER 4

The Noble Qurʾān

4.1 The Noble Qurʾān

4.2 Miracles of the Noble Qurʾān

4.1 The Noble Qurʾān

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Defend the authenticity of the Noble Qurʾān.
- Provide examples of the eloquence of the Qurʾān.
- Understand how the Qurʾān guides humanity and the intellect.
- Realize the importance of utilizing intellect to better understand our religion and the Qurʾān.

As we have previously learned, the Noble Qurʾān was revealed by Allah ﷻ to the final Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad ﷺ.[1]

THE WORD OF ALMIGHTY ALLAH ﷻ

The Noble Qurʾān has come from Allah ﷻ. They are the exact words of Allah ﷻ, sent through the Archangel Jibrāʾīl ؑ to our Noble Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

After the command of Allah ﷻ to the last Messenger ﷺ to: *"Read,"*[2] the Noble Prophet ﷺ spoke these words to his people in the Arabic language, exactly as they were delivered to him by Jibrāʾīl ؑ.

These words were memorized and written down by several people, and compiled into a book during the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The Qurʾān we have today is the exact same as that original Qurʾān that was compiled at the time of the Prophet ﷺ over 1,400 years ago. Every letter, word, and sentence is unaltered.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is this such an important characteristic of the Noble Qurʾān? Can we say the same thing about other historical books? Explain your answer.

PROVING THE MIRACULOUS NATURE OF THE QURʾĀN

The Qurʾān is a miracle from Allah ﷻ due to a number of reasons, including its unmatched eloquence.

The power and influence of language for the Arabs during the time period before Islam is very important for us to understand why Almighty Allah ﷻ gave the Noble Prophet ﷺ the Qurʾān as his miracle. Poets at that time were highly respected members of society.

When the Prophet ﷺ spoke the Noble words of the Qurʾān, the beauty and eloquence of those words, and their powerful meanings left most of the poets and the public amazed to the extent that some people claimed that the Noble Qurʾān was some kind of magic.

The Noble Qurʾān challenged the skilled Arab poets to produce even one chapter similar to the chapter of the Qurʾān in eloquence. This challenge was put forward multiple times in different forms, but of course, no one was able to meet such a challenge.

1 The main reference for this lesson is Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, eHAWZA Course: Sciences of the Qurʾān.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAlaq (96), Verse 1.

One simple example of the eloquence of the Qurʾān is the following verse:

وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

"And magnify your Lord." [3]

This verse is very short—it contains two words and one preposition. The *"wāw"* in the beginning is there to indicate the beginning of the sentence. Then, looking at the two words that follow it, we see the following miracles of eloquence and language structure:

- It expresses such an important concept in just two words. On the other hand, the translation of this verse in English requires many words to capture the true meaning such as: *"Declare the greatness only* [4] *of your Lord."*
- This phrase is a perfect palindrome, which means that it reads the same whether we read it backwards or forwards. This is very rare to find in literature, even when it is planned. Considering that the Prophet ﷺ was speaking this verbally—not writing or editing it—makes it even more amazing.
- The wording has a rhythm and a melody to it.
- It flows with the rest of the *sūrah* which has many other short *āyāt* consisting of 2-3 words ending in the letter *"rāʾ."*
- Its content is perfectly in line with the rest of the Qurʾān, and its detailed teachings on Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*.

Imagine trying to express the concept of *"Declare the greatness only of your Lord"* in any language, in only two words, as a palindrome, on your first attempt, verbally, without knowing how to read or write, in a rhythmic way, consistent with the style of the chapter, and the content of a long book, and without writing it or being able to edit it! *Subḥānallāh*—all glory belongs to Allah ﷻ!

PROVING THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE QURʾĀN

Authentic simply means 'something entirely true and therefore reliable.' The Qurʾān is authentic, and the unchanged word of Allah ﷻ throughout history.

All Muslims—despite their numerous differences of opinion on other sorts of topics in Islam—believe in the same Divinely-sent Book, the Qurʾān. As much as various groups of Muslims disagree on theological or historical issues, they do not dispute in regard to the wordings of the Noble Qurʾān, and believe that they are the exact same words as were revealed to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

The Qurʾān has remained unaltered, and this is why 1,400 years after the Prophet ﷺ passed away, there is still only one edition of the Qurʾān, used by Muslims of all sects, nationalities, and races.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muddaththir (74), Verse 3.

4 The word "only" is understood from the verse by the placement of the direct object *"Rabbaka"* before the verb *"Kabbir."*

A Muslim in Indonesia, for example, will read from the exact same text of the Qurʾān as a Muslim in Turkey. Wherever in the world you are, Muslims have the an identical Qurʾān with the same *sūrahs, āyāt,* words, and letters. If you were to pick up a Qurʾān in any part of the world right now, it would, without a doubt, be indifferentiable to all other copies of the Qurʾān anywhere else.

If this were a book written by any human being, then it would be easy to change or alter it; and there would have been different 'editions' or 'versions' of it; as well as discrepancies within it. However, this is a Divine Book that has been guaranteed to be protected from any changes or alterations by Allah ﷻ Himself, and thus remains unaltered until today. This is one of the miracles of the Qurʾān, and another proof of it being the Word of the Almighty.

He says in regards to this revelation:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

"Indeed, it is We who revealed the Reminder (the Qurʾān), and We will most surely be its guardian." [5]

Recently, an ancient manuscript of fragments of the Noble Qurʾān kept at the University of Birmingham was dated using radiocarbon analysis. This dated the parchment on which the text was written to the period between 568 AD and 645 AD with 95.4% accuracy. The test was carried out in a laboratory at the University of Oxford. The result placed the leaves close to the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who lived between 570 AD and 632 AD.

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥijr (15), Verse 9.

THE QUR'ĀN IS A TIGHTLY KNIT BOOK

The Noble Qur'ān refers to itself as *'Ḥakīm.'* One meaning of this is 'Wise.' Another meaning is that it is well-knit together. This means that the different parts of the Qur'ān complement each other, and never contradict one another. It also means that there are some miraculous aspects to the wordings and structure of the Noble Qur'ān.

Let us look at one example of this. Usually, we speak about "doing" good or evil actions. Similarly, the Noble Qur'ān uses this common expression of "doing" an action with the term *"'amal"* many times. However, in some particular instances, the Qur'ān uses the word *"kasab"* when referring to evil actions. The word *"kasab"* refers to doing an action so frequently that it becomes a part of the character of a person. So when Allah ﷻ speaks about who deserves to enter the Hellfire, the word *"kasab"* (earned/attained) is used rather than the word *"'amal"* (did). An example of this is in the following verse:

بَلَىٰ مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَٰطَتۡ بِهِۦ خَطِيٓـَٔتُهُۥ
فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ هُمۡ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ

"Yes (on the contrary), whoever earns misdeeds and is besieged by one's sinfulness—those shall be the inmates of the Fire, they will remain in it [forever]." [6]

By using the word *"kasab,"* the Qur'ān:

- Firstly emphasizes that those who deserve the Hellfire are the ones who repeatedly do an evil action until it becomes part of their personality.
- Secondly avoids contradiction in other places of the Qur'ān where Allah ﷻ states that those who performed evil deeds may be forgiven, then be permitted to enter Paradise.

There are many such examples of very precise choice of wordings in the Noble Qur'ān. How could a human being, who verbally spoke these words over a span of 23 years, remember what word or phrase he used in one place, and maintain that wording so it remains consistent with the message without any contradictions? Surely, this is beyond the abilities of anyone, and proves that this Book is the Word of Allah ﷻ.

Āyah and Sūrah

The Noble Qur'ān consists of *āyah* (plural: *āyāt*) and *sūrah* (plural: *sūwar*).

Āyah: This is often translated as verse. However, this is not the most accurate translation of the word *āyah*. *Āyah* literally means 'a sign.' Each *āyah* of the Qur'ān is a sign of:

- The unmatchable eloquence of the Qur'ān, and thus no one can ever replicate even a single *āyah* of the Qur'ān.
- The greatness of Allah ﷻ, the author of every *āyah.*

Sūrah: This is often translated as chapter. However, this is not the best translation for *sūrah*. Literally, *sūrah* comes from *"sūr"* which is 'a wall built around a city to contain and fortify it.' Every *sūrah* is like a wall around a city that brings together and contains the *āyāt* within it. Just like cities are made up of different things that function well together (such as houses, schools, hospitals, etc…), similarly a *sūrah* of the Qur'ān will often discuss different themes such as theology, rules of practical life, and history; and even though the themes are different, they complement one another—just like the different parts of a city complement each other. Further, just like some cities share similarities but are different in other ways, we see some that *sūwar* share similarities and remind us of other *sūwar*, but are also unique and different in their own way.

When we are reading the Qur'ān, we should take time to reflect and contemplate on the relationship between the *āyāt* and themes within each *sūrah* as this can help us gain more meaning from this Divine Book.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some similarities that you have noticed in your experience of reading the Qur'ān? Have you come across any common themes?

THE QUR'ĀN GUIDES THE INTELLECT

As mentioned above, it is imperative to reflect on the relationship of the *āyāt* and themes found within the Noble Qur'ān. This Final Revelation repeatedly encourages us to use our intellect when it comes to beliefs about the world we live in, and the decisions that we make in our life. Below are some examples to reflect on.

6 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 81.

Activity 4.1a: Āyah Analysis

Read the following *āyāt,* and determine what Allah ﷻ is trying to tell us; and what is it that He wants us to understand from them using our intellect?

...كَذَٰلِكَ يُحْيِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ وَيُرِيكُمْ ءَايَـٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

*"...Thus Allah brings life to the dead, and He shows you His signs so that you may **understand (taʿqilūn).**"* [7]

1. What does Allah ﷻ want us to understand from this verse?

وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَلَلدَّارُ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

*"And this world's life is no more than play and an idle sport, and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who guard (against evil); do you not then **understand (taʿqilūn)?**"* [8]

2. What is Allah ﷻ comparing in the above verse? What do we need to understand using our intellect?

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 73.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 32.

قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنفَعُكُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ۝ أُفٍّ لَّكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ۝

*"He (Ibrāhīm) said: 'What! Do you then serve besides Allah what brings you not any benefit at all, nor does it harm you? Woe to you and all that you worship instead of Allah! Have you then no sense (no intellect—**taʿqilūn**)?'"* [9]

3. In quoting Prophet Ibrāhīm's response to the idol-worshipers, what is the logical argument that Allah ﷻ has presented in this verse? What are we being asked to consider using our intellect?

Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ used intellectual reasoning with all sorts of people in order to guide them toward the true path of worshiping One God. The above words are how he tried to convince those people who worshiped statues. The following verse shows us how he tried to convince people who worshiped the sun, the moon, and the stars.

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ ٱلَّيْلُ رَءَا كَوْكَبًا ۖ قَالَ هَـٰذَا رَبِّى ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَ قَالَ لَآ أُحِبُّ ٱلْـَٰٔفِلِينَ ۝ فَلَمَّا رَءَا ٱلْقَمَرَ بَازِغًا قَالَ هَـٰذَا رَبِّى ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِى رَبِّى لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ۝ فَلَمَّا رَءَا ٱلشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَـٰذَا رَبِّى هَـٰذَآ أَكْبَرُ ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَـٰقَوْمِ إِنِّى بَرِىٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ۝ إِنِّى وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِىَ لِلَّذِى فَطَرَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝

"So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star; so he said: 'Is this my Lord?' But when it set, he said: 'I do not love things that set.' Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: 'Is this my Lord?' But when it set, he said: 'If my Lord had not guided me, I would certainly be of the erring ones.' Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: 'Is this my Lord? This is bigger.' But when it set, he said: 'O my people, surely I disassociate myself from what you worship besides Allah. Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of the polytheists.'" [10]

4. What was the argument that Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ presented to the idol-worshipers? What is a logical argument as to why objects that can come and go cannot be worshiped, or be in control?

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verses 66-67.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verses 76-79.

OBSTACLES TO USING THE INTELLECT

Despite the very clear and logical arguments that Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ presented to his people, they did not believe in him, nor his teachings. This was the same for many other Prophets ﷺ. This is because people often ignore the conclusions that their intellect reaches for the following reasons:

PERSONAL DESIRES AND INTERESTS: We often use our intellect and find out what is the right thing to do (for example, study hard and do our homework), but instead of then doing that, we follow our desires (and play video games).

IMITATING PEOPLE OF THE PAST: Many good and correct ideas are rejected simply because they go against what society believed in the past. Galileo was persecuted because he claimed that the center of the solar system was the sun and not the earth; and Socrates, the Greek philosopher, was forced to drink poison because he asked people too many questions about the purpose of life, ethics, and morals. Similarly, several Prophets ﷺ were persecuted throughout history because they tried to change the false ideas of society, and teach the truth about the Unity of God. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"And when it is said to them: 'Follow that which Allah has revealed,' they say: 'We follow that which our fathers believed.' What! Even though their fathers had no sense at all, and had no guidance?"* [11]

FEAR OF TYRANTS: Often people reject the truth because it is too difficult to try to bring about change, and it could cause them to be persecuted or killed by the evil tyrants of their time. A famous example from the Qurʾān is the example of Pharaoh and his people.

This is why the Qurʾān places so much emphasis on using the intellect. We have to make sure that when we make decisions in our lives or about our beliefs, we use our intellect only—and do not allow fear, imitation, or desires to influence our choices.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about a time when external factors influenced a decision you made that did not feel right to you. How is this similar to the concept above?

We have to learn to think independently, and make decisions based on what makes sense, not based on what our friends think, what our society thinks, or what suits us best. If we do not learn to do this, then we will end up making big mistakes in our lives that we will regret later on. We should always remember the following narration from Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ when it comes to making decisions based on the evidence we have and thinking independently: *"If you have a walnut clasped in your hand, and the entire world tells you that it is a nugget of gold, it will remain a walnut; and if you have a nugget of gold clasped in your hand, even if the entire world tells you it is a walnut, it will remain a gold nugget."* [12]

11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 170.
12 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, P. 285.

Activity 4.1b: Review Questions

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The word *āyah* is **best** translated as:

   a. verse
   b. a sign
   c. a chapter

2. The word *sūrah* is best translated as:

   a. a chapter
   b. a wall fortifying the *āyah*
   c. a sentence

3. The Qurʾān has:

   a. only been changed for grammatical reasons since its revelation
   b. never been altered
   c. is the original Word of Allah ﷻ
   d. b & c

TRUE OR FALSE: Identify whether the following are true or false. If false, correct the statement in the space below.

4. Every *āyah* of the Qurʾān can be read independently of the rest if you want to gain its true meaning. **TRUE** **FALSE**

5. The Qurʾān only explains theological laws for us. **TRUE** **FALSE**

6. How would you explain the authenticity of the Qurʾān? How can we prove that the Qurʾān is the exact Word of Allah ﷻ?

7. In your own words, what is the Qurʾān about?

8. Explain some of the barriers of using our intellect.

9. Explain how the Qurʾān is well-knit together.

4.2 Miracles of the Noble Qurʾān[1]

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain the miracles of the Noble Qurʾān.
- Provide specific examples of prophecies and miracles within the Qurʾān.
- Illustrate the authenticity of the Qurʾān through its miracles.

In our last lesson, we discussed the authenticity of the Noble Qurʾān. We discussed that the Qurʾān is the Word of Allah ﷻ, and that there are a number of proofs for this. We discussed that the Qurʾān is:

- Unmatchable in its eloquence
- Unchanged and unaltered since its revelation
- Unique in its style and expressions
- Tightly knit together and does not contradict itself

In this lesson, we will discuss some further proofs which are secondary to the main proofs, but are still very interesting.

SCIENTIFIC MIRACLES OF THE NOBLE QURʾĀN

Even though the goal of the Noble Qurʾān is not to present intricate scientific details, at times, it presents information about the reality of this world that was only discovered by human beings in the last 100 years or so. If these scientific facts were not known to anyone during the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, then where did this knowledge come from? It must be that it came from Allah ﷻ who revealed this information in the Qurʾān—as another miracle of the Qurʾān for people who would come at a later time. We will look at some of these examples below.

Expansion of the Universe

> "And it is We Who constructed the heaven with might, and verily, it is We Who are steadily expanding it." [2]

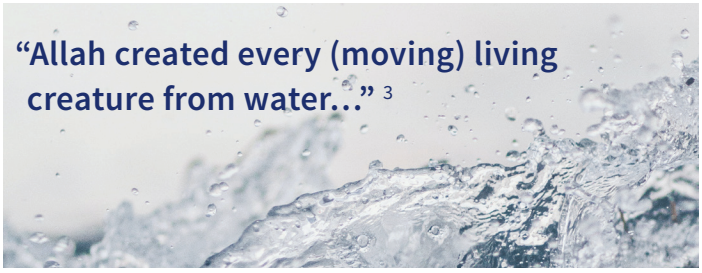
For a very long time, scientists and thinkers thought of the universe as constant in nature, meaning that it is always the same in size, and that it has always been around and had no beginning.

However, at the beginning of the 1900s, famous scientists such as the Russian physicist Alexander Friedmann, the Belgian cosmologist Georges Lemaitre, the American astronomer Edwin Hubble, and the German-born genius Albert Einstein, all had seemingly proved—in one way or another—that the universe was continuously expanding.

Amazingly, we have a passage in the Qurʾān which refers to this phenomenon. This is incredible, considering that the Qurʾān was revealed at a time when telescopes and such advanced scientific understandings were not even close to being invented or thought of.

1 The main reference for this lesson was: Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, eHAWZA Course: Sciences of the Qurʾān.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51), Verse 47.

The Creation of Human Beings from Water



It is commonly believed in modern science that water is the main component of organic (living) matter. Furthermore, it is accepted that 50-90% of living things consist of water. Simply put, without water, we cannot think of life. Today, astronauts send space probes to other planets in the universe, such as Mars, to search for any signs of water. This is because they know that if water is present there, then life is possible. So it is said that water is the precursor to life, and hence this could be another meaning for the verse from the Qurʾān mentioned above. The fact that this scientific information—which has only been found out very recently—was in the Qurʾān 1,400 years ago, indicates that the Qurʾān is not the word of a human being, but the Word of Almighty Allah ﷻ.

Iron Sent Down

Sūrah al-Ḥadīd makes reference to iron being "sent down."[4] This may at first seem strange as it appears to speak about iron being "sent" to Earth rather than it being "in the Earth." However, we have recently come to learn that at least some of the iron on Earth came from the meteorites,[5] and that iron was in fact "sent down" to Earth from space.

PROPHECIES IN THE NOBLE QURʾĀN

There are various predictions which the Noble Qurʾān made about future events that actually precisely took place later on. We will mention a few of them here:

The Victory of the Romans

"The Romans have been defeated, in the nearest land; but they, after their defeat, will be victorious. Within a few [three to nine] years. To Allah belongs the decision (of the matter), before and after (these events)..." [6]

According to historians, these words were revealed around 620 AH, almost seven years after the idol-worshiping Persian Empire had severely defeated the Christian Roman army in 613/614 AH. In fact, the Roman Empire (Byzantium) was defeated so badly that it seemed that the empire was on the verge of collapse. No one really thought that it would ever become victorious again. During this time though, the above words were revealed, declaring that the Roman Empire will be victorious again in a few (which in Arabic, typically refers to 3 to 9) years. The Arab polytheists found this impossible to believe. However, of course, this is exactly what transpired. The Romans fought the Persians again a few years later and were victorious.

The Exploration of Space

"O company of jinn and human beings. If you are able to pierce through the confines of the heavens and the earth, then pierce through them. You will not pierce through, except with clear authority." [7]

Here, one application of this verse could be the exploration of space by human beings, which only began in the late 1950s. The first man to go up to space was a Russian astronaut named Yuri Gagarin.

The Arabic word *sulṭān* at the end of this verse translated here as "clear authority" has other meanings as well, including force and power. It has been suggested that this could be referring to the great power or energy which is contained within flying objects that are launched into space.

CONCLUSION

Besides the unmatched eloquence and unique style of the Noble Qurʾān, there are also other arguments which help to demonstrate that the Qurʾān is the authentic Word of Allah ﷻ. These include some of the scientific miracles in the Qurʾān, as well as some prophecies made in this Divine Book which later came true.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nūr (24), Verse 45.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57), Verse 25.
5 Chase, M. (2019, March 2). *What is the origin of iron?* Sciencing. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from https://sciencing.com/origin-iron-5371252.html.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verses 2-4.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raḥmān (55), Verse 33.

Activity 4.2a: Qurʾānic Knowledge

Research three more aspects about the Qurʾān that can potentially be used to demonstrate its miraculous nature. Ask your teacher to guide you to reliable sources, as some material presented on this topic may be inaccurate. Be sure to cite the sources.

Present your findings in a dialogue or a debate format with your group to convince someone that the Qurʾān is an extraordinary Book. Use the rubric below to guide your dialogue or debate.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Body Language/ Etiquette	Struggled to maintain respectful language during the dialogue/ debate.	Language used was somewhat respectful, but left room for improvement.	Language used was respectful, but body language could have been improved.	Maintained respectful language and body language during the entire dialogue/debate.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes in the dialogue/debate.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet Islamic Principles mentioned in the lesson.	Content met Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented suited all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Dialogue/ debate lacked organization and cohesiveness.	Dialogue/debate was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more.	Dialogue/debate was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked cohesiveness.	Dialogue/debate was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of content and cohesiveness.
Quality	Content presented was not convincing or compelling.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose, and lacked quality.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Content presented was extremely compelling and convincing.

CHAPTER 5

Journey of the Soul

5.1 The Soul

5.2 Death

5.3 Barzakh

5.4 The Day of Judgment

5.5 The Hereafter

5.1 The Soul

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify the role our soul plays in understanding Allah ﷻ.
- Differentiate between the stages of spiritual development.
- Explain the importance of taming our desires in order to reach closeness to Allah ﷻ.

Activity 5.1a: Pre-Reading Reflection

1. Describe what the word "soul" means to you.

2. What role does your soul play in your daily life?

The last of the five fundamental beliefs of Islam is the **Resurrection** ***(al-Maʿād)***. We would have no access to the details about the Resurrection without the Qurʾān, the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and the Imāms ﷺ. While some of the general concepts can be proven by our intellect, the details must be obtained through the narrations.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to have details about the next world from the Qurʾān and *aḥādīth* versus our own experiences or intellect?

In Islam, unlike in other faiths, the emphasis on Resurrection is so great that over 25% or 1,640 *āyāt*[1] of the Qurʾān refer to it. It is a fundamental part of the belief in the Unity of Allah ﷻ,[2] the selection of Prophets ﷺ,[3] self-purification,[4] staying on the Right Path,[5] piety/God-consciousness, worshiping, peace of mind, bravery, and justice.

1 Leghaei, Mansour, *Journey to the Unseen World*, Lesson 1.
2 Repeated 30 times in the Qurʾān is the concept of belief in Allah ﷻ resulting in belief of the Hereafter.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṣād (38), Verses 45-47.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt (79), Verses 39-41.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṣād (38), Verse 26.

Denying the existence of the Hereafter can lead to social and economic crimes,[6] a sinful life,[7] immoral behavior, etc.

The soul is one of the important concepts that is related to the Resurrection and the Hereafter, and it is the focus of the rest of this lesson. Allah ﷻ, the All-Wise, created us with a body—our physical existence, and a soul—our spiritual existence. He tells us in the Noble Qurʾān that He created our physical existence, but also brings to life within us a different type of creation. This different creation is our soul, or our immaterial, non-physical existence.

"Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass; then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue; then We created the fleshy tissue as bones; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed them into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators!" [8]

Understanding our soul will lead us to understanding Allah ﷻ. We also believe that some of our journey in the afterlife is carried out through our soul, in a place called *Barzakh*. The soul will then be reunited with the body during resurrection. Imām ʿAlī ؑ says:

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

"A person who attains inner knowledge of one's soul will attain inner knowledge of one's Lord." [9]

WHAT IS THE SOUL AND HOW DO WE KNOW IT EXISTS?

The soul is the reality of who we are. It goes beyond our physical body which is material and consists of matter, whereas our soul lies in the immaterial, or non-physical spiritual realm. In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ describes the stages of the creation of the fetus physically, but when He comes to the creation of the soul, He says:

"...then We developed them into another creation." [10]

This confirms that the soul goes beyond the physical realm into an immaterial, non-physical realm of creation.

The Noble Qurʾān also describes the soul as being from the Command *(Amr)* of Allah ﷻ.

"And they ask you [O Muḥammad] concerning the soul (rūḥ). Say: 'The soul is from the Command of my Lord...'" [11]

If time permits, the teacher can possibly discuss the concept of the Gyges Ring or the *Harry Potter* 'Cloak of Invisibility' whereby if a person is not caught, one can get away with anything; or whether a typical person would be moral if they did not have to fear the consequences of their actions.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring_of_Gyges

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn (83), Verses 1-5.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qiyāmah (75), Verses 5-6.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verse 14.
9 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, Ḥadīth #4065.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verse 14.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 85.

كُن فَيَكُونُ

Be and it is[12]

This expression of "the Command of Allah" relates to another verse as well.

> "Surely, His Command (Amr) is that when He intends a thing, He only says to it: 'Be' and it is." [12]

According to one interpretation, when Allah ﷻ refers to the soul being from His Command, He is referring to the Command of existence. In other words, the soul is what gives something "life" and "spirit."

This is why we learned in Grade 7 that the soul is what makes 'us' us, such that if we were to think of ourselves without being distracted, then we would find our soul.

STOP AND REFLECT: If someone asked you to describe what makes you 'you,' how would you reply?

We all have an intuitive knowledge about the existence of our soul, so there is no need to prove its existence. However, there are some arguments that can help us prove the existence of the soul if need be.

Scientifically, we know that the physical body we have now is not what we had in the past, nor what we will have in the future because most of the cells in our body are constantly dying and regenerating (every 7-9 years or so). Despite this, we still identify ourselves as 'me!'

When we refer to our limbs, we say "my arm" or "my leg" and even though they are part of our bodies, we know they are not 'me.' Instinctively, we also know that our body parts in and of themselves do not have an identity of their own. For example, my arm only has an identity because of me, not on its own—yet I am not my arm, nor any other part of my body! Similarly, we refer to the 'body' of a deceased person because we instinctively know that upon death, the soul is separated from the body, and therefore we cannot refer to the dead body as a person.

Other phenomena such as dreams and near death experiences further highlight the presence of the soul.

12 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Yāsīn (36), Verse 82.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Just as we grow physically through our life and grow bigger and more mature over time, we are also supposed to develop spiritually. Our spiritual development is even more important than our physical development. The soul goes through a number of stages in order to develop and reach its perfection. According to the Islamic teachings, the soul has three stages of development, from the lowest to the most perfect.

The Evil-Commanding Soul *(Nafs al-Ammārah)*

This is often referred to as one's desires or the carnal soul. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

وَمَا أُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

"And I do not absolve my [own carnal] soul, for indeed the [carnal] soul prompts [people] to evil, except upon those whom my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." [13]

Allah ﷻ placed within human beings certain emotions like anger and lust. These emotions are necessary for our survival; however, they must be controlled and governed by our intellect. If they are not checked and supervised, then our desires can go beyond the limits of being beneficial for us, and instead command us to do evil. This aspect of our soul can eventually overpower us, and cause us physical and spiritual harm if we do not work to control it.

The Blaming Soul *(Nafs al-Lawwāmah)*

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ۝

"And I swear by the self-critical (reproaching) soul!" [14]

The reproaching or blaming soul, often called the conscience, is the aspect of the soul that judges our actions using the standard of our pure innate nature *(fiṭrah)*. If the actions go against our *fiṭrah* and what is good for the soul, then it makes us feel guilty. If the actions are in line with our pure *fiṭrah*, then it gives a feeling of peace and tranquility.

Once a man came to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and asked him a question. Before he spoke, the Prophet ﷺ said to him: *"Do you wish to ask your question, or should I tell you what your question is?"*

The man was surprised and asked the Prophet ﷺ to reveal his question. The Prophet ﷺ told him: *"You have come to ask about what is good (virtuous), and what is bad (vice)."*

That was in fact exactly what the man had come to ask!

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ placed his fingertips on the man's heart and said: *"Check it with your heart—regardless of what people may say; righteousness is what your soul (nafs) is at rest with, while vice is that action after whose performance you feel guilty."* [15]

In order to understand more about what is good and what is bad, and what is recommended or obligatory, and what is reprehensible or forbidden, we have to learn the Islamic rules and guidelines. We cannot simply rely on our gut feelings to understand what is good, and what is evil for our soul. However, this *ḥadīth* teaches us that for sincere and pure people, doing acts of goodness brings about peace and tranquility to one's soul, whereas even the thought of performing an evil action will disturb the person.

The Tranquil Soul *(Nafs al-Muṭma'innah)*

This is the stage that the soul reaches when a person has managed to firmly control one's desires and take heed of their conscience. In other words, one has learned to manage the "commands" of the aspect of the soul that is concerned with emotions and desires, and taken heed of the warnings of the self-critical soul and improved one's character and actions.

The ultimate reward for having achieved this is that Allah ﷻ accommodates the person in a special place in Paradise!

يَٰٓأَيَّتُهَا ٱلنَّفْسُ ٱلْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝ ٱرْجِعِىٓ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۝ فَٱدْخُلِى فِى عِبَٰدِى وَٱدْخُلِى جَنَّتِى ۝

"O soul that are at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, and enter into My garden." [16]

13 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 53.
14 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Qiyāmah (75), Verse 2.
15 Shahīd Muṭahharī, *Āshnāyī bā Qur'ān*, Vol. 1, P. 74.
16 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Fajr (89), Verses 27-30.

HOW CAN WE TAME OUR COMMANDING SOUL?

Before we begin this section, it has to be noted that the aim of a Muslim is not to "kill" one's desires, but to "control and tame" them, such that instead of desires controlling a person, a person controls one's desires. For example, instead of my desire telling me what and when to eat, I tell it what and when to eat. I still do need to eat, and if I do not provide proper nourishment to my body, then I am misusing the trust that Allah ﷻ has given me. Imām ʿAlī ؑ says:

"Rule your souls by continuously struggling with them." [17]

As alluded to earlier, the most effective way of taming the soul is to struggle with oneself, or in other words, trying to control the commanding soul. This struggle, or *jihād* as it is known in Arabic, is considered the greatest struggle of all. Allah ﷻ tells us in the Noble Qurʾān:

"And (by) the soul and Him Who made it perfect. Then He inspired it (to understand what is) wrong (wicked) and right (righteousness); Indeed, that one will be successful who purifies it; and indeed, that one will fail who corrupts it." [18]

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said:
"The person who does not refine one's soul will be disgraced by bad habits." [19]

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said in regards to a particularly difficult battle that was fought during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ:

"The Prophet of Allah dispatched a contingent of the army (to the battlefront). Upon their (successful) return, he said to them: 'Blessed are those who have performed the minor struggle (jihād al-aṣghar), and have yet to perform the major struggle (jihād al-akbar).' He was asked: 'What is the major struggle?' The Prophet replied: 'The struggle against one's self.'" [20]

This struggle is considered the major struggle *(jihād al-akbar)* as it is much more difficult than fighting on the battlefield. In this struggle against one's self, a person has to constantly battle enemies that are hosted inside one's own existence, and this struggle lasts an entire lifetime.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is something that you have struggled with internally? Has it felt harder than any outward, physical struggle that you have faced?

When we study or learn about manners and etiquettes *(akhlāq)*, we are learning how to train our soul and move toward our spiritual perfection. When we study the rules of Islam *(aḥkām)*, we are also learning about actions that harm our soul (*ḥarām* and *makrūh* things), and actions that help our soul (*wājib* and *mustaḥab* things).

After we die, our body will decay and be absorbed into the earth. However, our soul will remain alive and enter the world of *Barzakh*, where it could remain for thousands of years. During this time, as well as on the Day of Resurrection, our fate will be determined by the level of perfection that our soul reached while in this world. Therefore, just as we look after the physical health of our body so that we can live a healthy life in this world, we must also look after the spiritual health of our soul which will determine our fate for eternity.

17 *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, Ḥadīth #6195.
18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shams (91), Verses 7-10.
19 *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, Ḥadīth #6199.
20 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 19, P. 182, Ḥadīth #31.

Activity 5.1b: Taming our Desires

Consider the following emotions and desires that we might face on a daily basis. In the space provided, discuss ways in which we can tame these emotions and desires before they control us, or become ingrained habits within us.

1. Choosing to play a game or talk to a friend over completing our homework.

2. Continue playing a video game or any other task we might be doing despite hearing the *adhān* and knowing that the time for *ṣalāh* has arrived.

3. Looking over at someone else's paper when we are struggling to answer a question on a final exam.

4. What is an example of something you can think of, or have had to overcome in your own life that was difficult, but you kept the better outcome in mind? Explain.

Activity 5.1c: Review Questions

1. *Nafs al-Ammārah* is:

   a. The evil-commanding soul that makes us give into our desires.
   b. The blaming soul that makes us use our conscience.
   c. The tranquil soul.

2. The greatest struggle in the life of a human being is:

   a. Fighting in a war or battle.
   b. Fighting against a disease.
   c. Fighting against the desires of one's own self.

3. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ says that we should tame or rule ourselves by:

   a. Listening to our self (our desires).
   b. Killing all of our desires.
   c. Constantly struggling with our self (our desires).

4. Our fate on the Day of Resurrection will be determined by:

   a. How much charity we gave in this world.
   b. The level of perfection that our soul reached in this life.
   c. The number of good deeds that we performed while on Earth.

5. Vocabulary Activity:

Match the correct definitions on the right to the words on the left side.

Maʿād •	• **Soul**
Nafs al-Muṭmaʾinnah •	• **The Evil-Commanding Soul**
Nafs •	• **Resurrection**
Jihād al-Akbar •	• **The Tranquil Soul**
Nafs al-Ammārah •	• **The Major Struggle**

6. Describe *Nafs al-Lawwāmah* in your own words.

7. Why is the struggle of the self considered to be the greater struggle?

5.2 Death

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand what death means in Islam.
- Know the importance of remembering death often.
- Explain the importance of accounting for our actions and deeds regularly.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is death? How does it happen?

Death is an inescapable reality. Regardless of whether we are believers or not, each one of us has to accept death as a fact of our existence in this world. Since it is inescapable, and there are some mysteries around it, there are certain questions we naturally begin to ask. For example: What is death? Is it destruction, annihilation, and non-existence? Or is it a change, a development, and a transition from one world to another? In this lesson, we hope to have a better understanding of the main Islamic beliefs about death, and the importance of preparing ourselves for this journey.

WHAT IS DEATH?

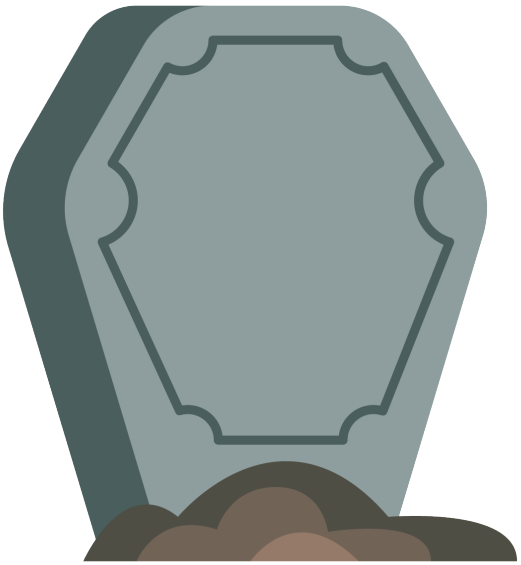
Death, in essence, is the separation of the soul from the body. It occurs when the soul leaves the body. The body dies, remains in this material world, and decomposes, while the soul moves on to the next stage of its existence.

Therefore, death is not the end of life. Rather, just like life, 'death' is something which is created, and is itself a stage of life. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

> "Blessed be He... Who created death and life, so that He might test you which of you is the most righteous in actions." [1]

Death is the end of the bodily existence in this world, but it is a continuation of the life of the soul in another realm; it is a transition from one abode to another; from this temporary world to an eternal life. Imām Ḥasan رحمه الله said:

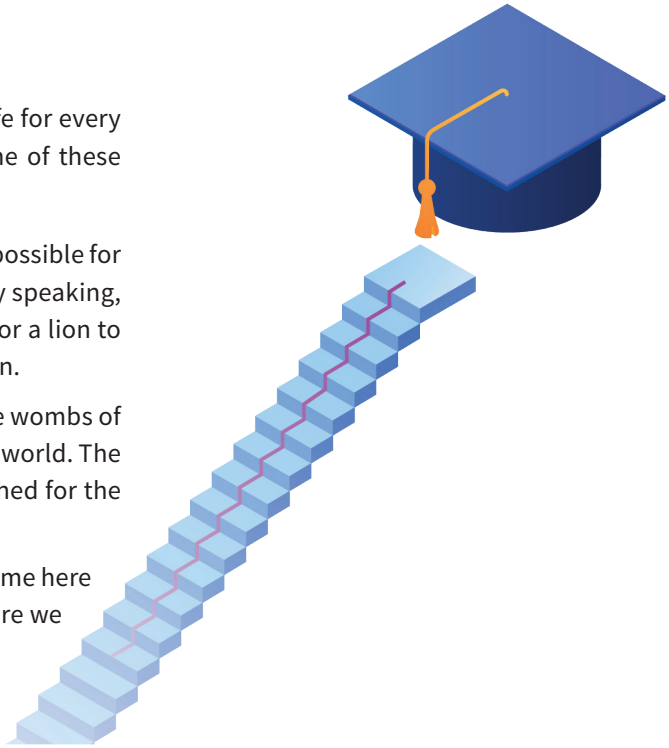
"(Death is) the greatest happiness that comes to the believers, when they migrate from the house of misery to eternal bliss; and (it is) the greatest disaster that befalls the unbelievers, when they go from their paradise (i.e. this world) to the fire which will never be extinguished and will never burn itself out!" [2]



STOP AND REFLECT: Explain the *ḥadīth* above. Why is death considered to be the "greatest disaster" which befalls the unbelievers? Why is it the "greatest happiness" which comes to believers? What does this say to us about how we should live our lives in this world?

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mulk (67), Verses 1-2.
2 Rizvi, Saeed Akhtar, *Day of Judgment,* P. 22.

REASONS FOR DEATH



There are many reasons why death is a necessary part of the journey of life for every living creature, whether it is a plant, an animal, or a human being. Some of these reasons are the following:

1. One of the basic rules of creation in this material world is that it is not possible for life in this physical world to continue forever. This is because generally speaking, in order for one creature to live, another one must die. For example, for a lion to live, a gazelle must die; or for a goat to live, it must eat grass; and so on.
2. Death is a movement from one world to another, just as we were in the wombs of our mother and we had to come out of that existence to come into this world. The next world is one in which we will be judged, then rewarded or punished for the choices we made in this present world.
3. Human beings were not created to live in this world forever. We only came here to learn and act. Death in this life is like a graduation from school where we are now ready to step into the real world.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is death in this life considered to be like a graduation from school? What are the similarities?

THE LAST MOMENTS BEFORE DEATH

We learned that death is a movement from one world to another. This transition is difficult for the human soul. Just as the birth of a baby into this world involves a lot of pain, and the baby emerges crying, the movement from this world to the next involves pain and difficulty as well. The Noble Qur'ān refers to these last moments which come before death as "the stupor of death."

"And the stupor of death will come in truth; that is what you were trying to escape." [3]

This will be a very difficult time. For most people, it will involve both physical and spiritual pain. A person will begin to lose one's ability to speak or act in any way. Those who squandered the blessings of Allah ﷻ and did not repent for their misdeeds will truly begin to regret much of what they did during their lives. They will wish that they had spent their time chasing after what they could have taken with them to their next life (i.e. good deeds that led to a pure soul), rather than what they are going to leave behind (such as wealth, prestige, and worldly comforts).

STOP AND REFLECT: How are you planning and preparing for what you would like to take with you to the next life? What can you improve on? Does this mean that you cannot have, or attain any goals in this life?

3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Qāf (50), Verse 19.

REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH

We will learn in later lessons that whatever happens to us after death is a direct result of what we did in this world. Whatever happiness or suffering that our soul will experience in its next life is a consequence of what we did in this life. Therefore, it becomes imperative that we constantly remember death, and understand the reality that death can occur at any moment. This will help us be more aware of the need to make good choices and prepare for what will come after death. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said the following to his son, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ:

"Enliven your heart by preaching…make it humble by remembering death, make it believe in mortality…recall what befell those who came before you…You will find that they have departed and are lodged in a lonely house…" [4]

When remembering death, we should remember its mysteries and suddenness:

1. **Location:** Where a person will die is not known to anyone: *"...and no soul knows in what land they shall die; indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware..."* [5]

2. **Time:** When a person will die is also not known to anyone: "*What! Do the people of the cities then feel secure from Our punishment coming to them at night while they sleep? Or do the people of the cities feel secure from Our punishment coming to them in the morning while they play?"* [6]

3. **State:** No one knows whether they will die in a good state of being dutiful servants of Allah or not. *"...therefore die not unless you are submissive (Muslims)!"* [7]

OBSERVANCE OF OUR ACTIONS

When we remember the reality and suddenness of death, we become more aware of the importance of our actions, and the need to improve ourselves.

Maintaining consistency in reflecting on our actions can be a difficult task, but remembering certain things can help us. How we were last year does not really matter, but rather, how do we want to be when death comes upon us? If we were very pious last year, but now we have lost our faith, then we could go back to Allah ﷻ as a disbeliever, regardless of our past. We must ensure that we are constantly keeping up our good deeds, and staying away from evil deeds regularly. This can happen when we remember that death is not a stranger, and it can come knocking at our door at any time—not when we are 90 years of age or older!

A good example of this is of a man during the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who after hearing the message of the Prophet ﷺ, decided to accept Islam. However, thinking to himself that he could not quit alcohol and had plenty of time, he decided that he would continue to drink for another year, and then accept Islam. Unfortunately, he died before the end of the year and met his Lord as a disbeliever.

4 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter #31.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 34.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verses 97-98.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 132.

STEPS OF OBSERVANCE AND ACCOUNTING

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝
وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ۝

"O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent for its tomorrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do. And be not like those who became oblivious of Allah, so He made them oblivious of their own souls: these it is that are the transgressors." [8]

Imagine that you are a student in class, and each term your teacher comes to check that you have completed all of the tasks that they set for you throughout the term. If you carefully kept an account of all of these tasks—the ones that you completed and those that you did not, then when your teacher announces that he/she wants to check if you have kept your work up to date, you have nothing to worry about. On the other hand, a student who did not keep their work up to date will panic when the teacher comes around to check everyone's work. Death is like this, and we have to always be prepared for it because it can come at any time—without any notice.

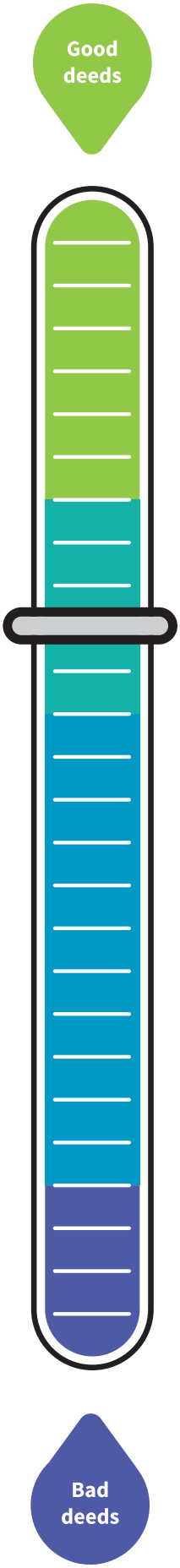
This is the same for our deeds and actions. If we do not keep track of our actions and reflect upon them, then we will not be aware of our sins and mistakes, nor will we give ourselves a chance to improve. It is necessary for people to habitually review their actions on a regular basis, and assess themselves objectively. Besides reflecting on our actions on a daily basis, we should also use certain milestones like birthdays, new calendar years, and other special Islamic occasions to think about our spiritual progress over the past month or year.

The Prophet ﷺ said the following in his will to his close companion, Abū Dharr:

"O Abū Dharr, no one can be from the pious people unless they keep an account of their actions: what they have done, eaten, and said today." [9]

Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ؑ said:

> "A person who does not examine and evaluate oneself every day is not from among us. (A person who examines oneself), if they performed a good deed, then they beseech Allah to increase them (in virtues); and if they perpetrated a vice, then they seek Allah's forgiveness for it, and are penitent before Him." [10]



8 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Ḥashr (59), Verses 18-19.

9 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 16, P. 98.

10 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, *Kitāb al-Īmān wal-Kufr, Bāb Muḥāsabat al-Aʿmāl*, Ḥadīth #2.

A person who is going toward one's Lord—and every single human being is on this journey back to Allah ﷻ—should be aware of what they have done. It is for this reason that we should analyze our actions each and every day. Self-observance and accounting can be divided into four stages:

Al-Mushāraṭah: Impose some conditions on yourself every morning that today you will fulfill certain things; and if you do not do them, then you will implement certain consequences.

For example, if you have a habit of lying, then you put a condition on yourself that you will not lie today. If you lie, then the consequence will be that you will deny yourself a particular pleasure that you enjoy doing (e.g. not playing video games for two days).

Al-Murāqabah: Observing yourself throughout the day, and being conscious of the conditions that you set upon yourself at the beginning of that day.

Al-Muḥāsabah: At the end of the day or time period, take yourself to account over your actions.

You need to look back at your day, and check whether or not you lied during that day.

Al-Muʿātabah/Al-Muʿāqabah: Applying the consequences that you set at the beginning of the day if you broke the conditions.

For example, if you lied, then you have to apply the consequences that you set for yourself. If you did not lie, then you thank Allah ﷻ for this, and pray to be able to continue in your endeavors to become a better person.

Activity 5.2a: Reflection

Consider the four stages of self-observance above. What is a habit or an action that you would like to stop doing, or something that you want to become better at; and how can you follow these stages mentioned? Using the space below, set goals for yourself, and how you can hold yourself accountable at each stage.

1. *Al-Mushāraṭah*

2. *Al-Murāqabah*

3. *Al-Muḥāsabah*

4. *Al-Muʿātabah/Al-Muʿāqabah*

Attempt to use these goals for the next week to help you pick up a good habit, or drop a bad habit/action that you do not like in yourself. How did it work for you? Can you try this for longer?

Allah ﷻ loves His servants who are increasing their righteous actions to gain nearness to Him. Therefore, we should not remain in the same state that we have been in for years; and we should really attempt to increase and multiply our good actions. For example, if we wake up for *Fajr* every morning, but do so close to the end of its time, then we should work on waking up a bit closer to the beginning of its time. Or, if we wake up for *Fajr* at prime time, then we can work on staying up a bit longer, like until sunrise or so. That way we are continuously working to improve ourselves as much as possible.

At the same time, while our actions are increasing in number, many of us may fall into the trap of feeling proud over our good deeds, or bragging about them to other people. However, it is always important to recognize that any righteous action is a blessing from Allah ﷻ because He has guided us toward it, and given us the ability to be able to perform it.

Activity 5.2b: Review Questions

1. Death is:

   a. Annihilation.
   b. Anti-life.
   c. The beginning of another life.

2. Death is:

   a. Something unnatural and strange.
   b. A natural part of the world we live in.
   c. Neither of the above.

3. Death is a time of:

   a. Spiritual Pain.
   b. Physical Pain.
   c. Emotional Pain.
   d. a & b

4. The self-observance stage of setting conditions for yourself is:

   a. *Al-Murāqabah.*
   b. *Al-Mushāraṭah.*
   c. *Al-Muʿaqabah.*

5. Which of the following is true?

   a. We should start preparing for death when we are old or after we become ill.
   b. We should expect death at any time.
   c. We should not worry about death at a young age and get depressed about it.

6. How can reflection and self-observance of our daily actions help us prepare for death?

Activity 5.2c: Journal Entries

Write journal entries (on the next page) for the next few days keeping track of your daily actions (i.e. what you ate, what you did, what you said, etc.).

Post Journal Reflections:

Is there anything in these entries that you would like to change? If so, then go on to create a plan using the four stages of self-observance as you did in the activity above.

WEEKLY PLANNER

MONDAY

TUESDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

WEEK OF: _____

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

SUNDAY

NOTES

5.3 Barzakh

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define *Barzakh.*
- Identify the characteristics of *Barzakh.*
- Understand how the departed souls can benefit from the living ones.

STOP AND REFLECT: Define what *Barzakh* means to you.

What do you know about the realm of *Barzakh*? By now, we should already be familiar with some of the main concepts of death. To begin this lesson, we will go through some of the points from the previous lesson, followed by a short explanation on *Barzakh*, its philosophy, and some of its characteristics. We will then conclude the lesson with a discussion on one of the most effective and practical methods to prepare for it.

REVIEW

The dissociation between the body and the soul is called death. As soon as we die, the soul enters the stage of *Barzakh* which literally means a 'barrier between two things.' In other words, it means that Allah ﷻ has placed a curtain or an intermediary stage between this world and the Hereafter. The world of *Barzakh* is often referred to as "the grave" in the *aḥādīth*. So when we speak about something happening to a soul in the grave, we are talking about this happening in *Barzakh*.

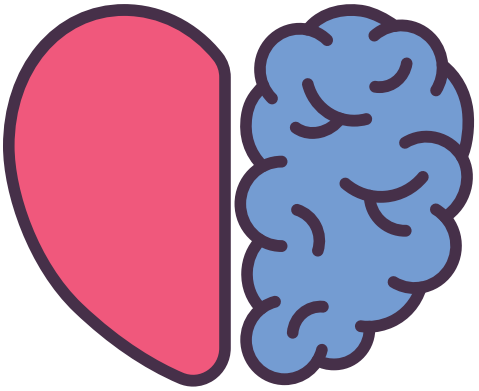
Barzakh is followed by the Day of Resurrection. Everyone who has died so far, good or evil, old or young, is currently in *Barzakh*. They are either enjoying a taste of paradise, suffering temporary punishment, or are in a lengthy state of slumber. All of them are "waiting" for the Day of Judgment.

Some of the characteristics of the life in *Barzakh* include:

- Being questioned about the actions that one performed in this world to some degree.
- The pressure or squeezing of the grave, which is a punishment for specific sins.
- Occasionally being given permission to visit loved ones in this world.
- Being able to hear the people still alive in this world without the ability to reply.

We will now examine each of these in more detail.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BARZAKH



Questioning

One of the aspects of life in *Barzakh* is that people will be questioned in the grave. People will be asked about their Creator, the Prophets ﷺ, Imāms ﷺ, religion, scripture, life, youth, and wealth.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"A deceased will be questioned in one's grave about five things: their ṣalāh, zakāt, Ḥajj, fasting, and wilāyah (love and obedience to the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ). Then wilāyah will say to the other four from the side of the grave: 'Whatever you are short of, I will complete it (for them).'"* [1]

After a person is buried in the grave, two angels will come and confront the deceased and ask them about their beliefs and what they did in the world. It should be noted that grave, in this terminology, does not merely mean a pit or under the ground where a dead body is buried—as there are cases where a person may drown to death in the ocean and one's body is never recovered, or murder cases where the body is never found to be buried, etc. The word "grave" in Islamic literature is another expression for *Barzakh*.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

> "The Barzakh is the grave, and it is the reward or punishment between this world and the Hereafter." [2]

Also, questions and answers are not a matter of the tongue. We will be questioned about the reality of our beliefs, and the answers will come from the inner voice and deep without our heart. In other words, mere knowledge will be of no use if it was not combined with the proper beliefs and actions.

STOP AND REFLECT: What can we do to prepare for the questioning in *Barzakh* if mere knowledge will be of no use? How can we change our daily habits to help us?

Pressure or Squeezing of the Grave

This is a type of punishment that will vary for different people. It means that the soul of a dead person will be under a type of pressure as a means of torturing in order to cleanse the soul.The narrations indicate that most people, including many believers, will suffer this punishment of squeezing in the grave.[3] There are however, some narrations which indicate that performing certain good actions consistently such as the Night Prayer *(Ṣalātul Layl)*, fasting, and *Ḥajj,* can protect a person from the pressures of the grave.[4]

1 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol 3, P. 241.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 6, P. 218.
3 *Al-Kāfi*, Vol 3, P.136.
4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, Vol. 2, P.139.

As well, there are particular actions which will result in the intensity of this type of punishment. Some of the main ones are:

- Tale-bearing *(namīmah).*
- Bad conduct with one's family at home.
- Being careless about *najāsah*—not purifying oneself properly after urinating.[5]

The story of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh tells us about the squeezing of the grave. Saʿd was one of the leaders of the Muslims, and among the closest people to the Prophet ﷺ. Unfortunately, Sa'd was wounded severely by an arrow during the Battle of Aḥzāb, and passed away soon afterwards. During his funeral procession, the Prophet ﷺ carried different corners of his coffin, moving from one corner to the next, as a mark of great respect for him. The Prophet ﷺ even said that there were many angels who had come to join the procession of Saʿd. When they reached the graveyard, the Prophet ﷺ himself entered the grave and prepared it for Saʿd. When Saʿd's mother saw all of this, she was very happy and congratulated her son. However, the Prophet ﷺ said that it was too soon for her to speak, because Saʿd would likely suffer the pressure of the grave. When asked why this would happen even though the Prophet ﷺ had so much respect for him and he was such a great man, the Prophet ﷺ responded that: *"He was ill-mannered with his family."* [6]

We can see from this story that the pressure of the grave is often a way for Allah ﷻ to purify people from some of their sins before the Day of Judgment. Even though Saʿd was a great person, he still had to face difficulty in the grave because of his ill manners toward his family, and this would hopefully purify him and save him from punishment in the eternal Hereafter.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think Allah ﷻ has placed so much importance on how we treat our family, and the issues of purification and impurity *(ṭahārah* and *najāsah)*?

Visitation of the Souls and Benefiting from the Living Ones

Depending on the status of the souls, they may be able to visit their families. If it is the soul of a believer, then they will be shown only the good actions of their family. The soul of a non-believer will be shown the bad actions of their family. This is another type of reward or punishment in *Barzakh*.

It has been narrated from Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ that the departed souls visit their homes every Friday and call out:

> "O people of my house! May Allah bless you! Have mercy on us! Whatever we have done in this world, we are facing its consequences now, while the fruits of our hard work (in the world) are being enjoyed by others. Favor us by giving on our behalf a dirham [some money], or bread, or clothes (to the needy), so that Allah may reward you with heavenly attire." [7]

It is very important that we should not forget our deceased family members, especially our parents! They have no power to perform good deeds in their current state, and they rely on their children, relatives, and other close ones to aid them with good deeds. They eagerly await some favors from the living ones. We should particularly pray for them in *Ṣalātul Layl,* and also after every prayer. We should try to share the reward of any good actions we do with our deceased relatives. Dedicating the reward to them does not mean that we will lose out on any of the reward ourselves. In this world, if we share something with someone, we lose a part of it.

However, in the next world, sharing the rewards of an action does not diminish from the rewards of the one who performed the action, but rather increases them!

5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 6, P. 275.
6 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ*, Vol. 1, P. 309.
7 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 2, P. 223.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can we tie this into the concept of *tabarruk*[8] at *majālis,* or reciting *Fātiḥah* for the deceased souls?

Hearing without Reply

The dead, during their status in *Barzakh*, can hear when we communicate with them, although they are unable to respond. In the cases of the special, intimate servants of Allah ﷻ, they do respond, but we cannot hear their response.

Several cases of the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ talking to the dead have been recorded. After the battle of Badr, the Prophet ﷺ addressed the dead soldiers from the troops of Quraysh and spoke to them.[9] Similarly, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ sat down next to the corpses of Kaʿb ibn Suwar and Ṭalḥah, after the battle of Jamal (the Camel) and said to them:

> "Surely, I found the promise of my Lord to be true, so did you find the promise of your Lord to be true as well?" [10]

Preparing for Barzakh

Different sins that a person commits in this world will result in varying severities and types of punishments in the grave. Abū Dharr, a pious and truthful companion of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, when burying his son was saddened that his son was no longer with him, and he prayed for him at his graveside. Often, when a child dies before their mother or father, their parents usually unhesitatingly wish that they had left this world before their child. However, due to Abū Dharr's knowledge, he said to his son at that moment that he would have preferred to die instead of his son had it not been for his fear of the punishment of the grave.[11]

For the virtuous servants of Allah ﷻ, unimaginable bounties and pleasures await them in *Barzakh* as they have been promised. The extent to which a person will enjoy or suffer in the grave depends entirely on what deeds one performed in this lifetime.

8 *Tabarruk* is something that you dedicate to Allah ﷻ, and because of this dedication and connection it becomes 'blessed.' It is something that is connected to Allah ﷻ or the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. It is also a term which has become associated with food that is served at religious gatherings that may either have a general supplication recited over it, thus 'blessing' the food; or is provided by an individual as an offering in the memory of a departed loved one. In other cultures, it has come to be known by other names, such as *niyāz, thawāb…*

9 Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5, P. 97.

10 Ibn Abil-Ḥadid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 1, P. 248.

11 Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *Muntahā al-Āmāl*, P. 296.

Activity 5.3a: Video Reflection

The World of Barzakh: Resurrection Lesson 7

al-islam.org/kids-corner/world-barzakh-resurrection-lesson-7

After watching the video 'The World of *Barzakh*: Resurrection Lesson 7', write down 3-4 new ideas or things that you learned which were not presented in this lesson.

Activity 5.3b: Review Questions

1. Good people in *Barzakh*:

   a. See the bad things that happen to their families in this world.
   b. See only the good things that happen to their families in this world.
   c. Cannot see anything of this world.

2. The souls in *Barzakh:*

   a. Can hear what is being said to them from this world.
   b. Cannot hear what is said to them in this world.
   c. We do not know much about this.

3. Which of the following actions mentioned in several narrations will lead a person to be punished with the pressure of the grave?

   a. Lying.
   b. Backbiting.
   c. Tale-bearing.

4. *Barzakh* literally means:

   a. A barrier between two things.
   b. A transition period.
   c. A new world.

5. One of the punishments of being ill-mannered to family members is:

   a. Questioning on the Day of Judgment.
   b. Pressure or squeezing of the grave.
   c. Neither a nor b.

6. Explain some of the characteristics of being in *Barzakh*? Why do you think that Allah ﷻ has made it this way?

Activity 5.3c: Reflection

Two of the characteristics of *Barzakh* include being able to visit one's loved ones, and hearing them without being able to reply. Think about your daily actions and conversations—are they ones that would make those souls who visit you happy? How might this change your day-to-day habits?

5.4 The Day of Judgment

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explore *Maʿād* (or The Return which refers to the Resurrection) as a fundamental Islamic belief.
- Define alternative names for the Day of Resurrection such as: *Yawm ad-Dīn, Yawm al-Qiyāmah, Yawm al-Ḥashr,* and *Yawm al-Ḥisāb*.
- Explore three proofs or evidences for the Day of Judgment: Innate features, Wisdom of Allah ﷻ, and Divine Justice.
- Describe the stages that will occur leading up to the Day of Resurrection, and then on to the Day of Judgment, such as: The blowing of the trumpet, rising from the graves, assembly on the *Maḥshar*, receiving the Book of Actions, and the questioning.

In the previous lessons, we discussed various aspects of life after this world—from death to *Barzakh*. In this lesson, we will discuss one of the fundamental beliefs of all major religions, especially Islam: *Maʿād* or The Return or Resurrection. As we learned in previous years, there are many names for the Day of Resurrection such as: *Yawm ad-Dīn* (The Day of Judgment), *Yawm al-Qiyāmah* (The Day of Rising or Resurrection), *Yawm al-Ḥashr (*The Day of Gathering), *Yawm al-Ḥisāb (*The Day of Recompense), etc.

It should be noted that '*Yawm*' or 'Day' in this context does **not** mean the regular day and night of 24 hours, but rather it refers to a 'period of time' which is not describable with the measure of time as we know it today.

This is why the Qurʾān uses a very large time span, such as one thousand years, to describe it;[1] or in another place fifty thousand years.[2] Another possible reason for why it is called 'Day' is how just like the sun exposes everything, the 'light of truth' will expose the reality of our actions on that Day.[3]

Activity 5.4a: Scavenger Hunt

Conduct a search on the names of the days listed above in the Qurʾān or in some *aḥādīth*. Are you able to find more names for the Day of Judgment? What are they?

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah as-Sajdah (32), Verse 5.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Maʿārij (70), Verse 5.
3 Shīrāzī, Dasteghayb, *The Hereafter (Maʿad)*, P. 64 under the heading of: "How will the Powdered Bones become Alive?"; Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 47.

LOGICAL PROOFS FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

We know that the Day of Judgment will definitely take place because the Qurʾān, just like the Divinely-sent Books before it, speaks about it as a definite occurrence. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ explained in detail what will take place on that Day and just before it. But is there a way for us to be convinced about the **need** for a Day of Judgment through logical reasoning? We will now look at three logical proofs or evidences that can be used to explain the necessity of a Day of Accountability.

1. Proof from Innate Features

Human beings are born with some characteristics already pre-programmed within them. These characteristics are called innate features or needs. Some of these include: hunger, thirst, love, etc., and since Allah ﷻ has already pre-programmed these things, He has also created legitimate and good ways to fulfill them. Loving immortality, and the attribute of survival after death is a natural desire of human beings that appears to have been held by them from the earliest of times. The instinct of everlastingness will not be satisfied unless there is an immortal life after this transient one.

Creating an innate characteristic, but not allowing it to be fulfilled would be in vain, and not compatible with Divine wisdom. Therefore, Allah ﷻ must definitely create a realm where we can live forever, and this is the perpetual Hereafter.

STOP AND REFLECT: Can you think of some other innate characteristics that Allah ﷻ may have programmed into human beings in order to encourage them to strive for the Hereafter?

2. Proof of the Wisdom of Allah ﷻ

We are living in a meaningful world in which everything has a purpose and an aim.[4] If death were the end of everything, then the creation of the entire universe would be in vain—without any real purpose. We can all see that we live in a vast and expansive universe, the limits of which we still have not discovered. We can also see the incredible level of detail and precision within this universe, and how it has been designed to permit life in general, and human life in particular. It does not make sense that all of this is here so that one day it will just perish and cease to exist, with no consequences or effects.[5] Why would the Wise and Intelligent Creator, Allah ﷻ, create such an incredible world in vain without any purpose or reason to go along with it? Allah ﷻ asks us to consider this question many times in the Qurʾān, and affirms that this world was not created in vain.

"...Those who reflect on the creation of the heavens and the Earth (thinking): 'Our Nurturer, You did not create this in vain, Glory to be You, so protect us from the punishment of the Fire.'" [6]

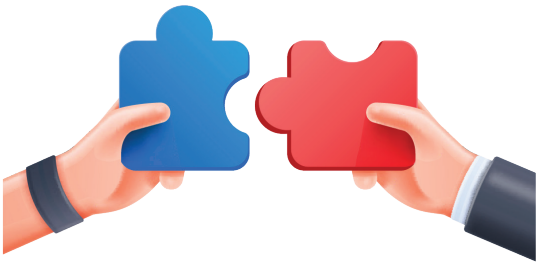
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥijr (15), Verse 85.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʿminūn (23), Verse 115.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 191.

3. Proof of the Divine Justice

Justice is one of Allah's Attributes as mentioned in previous lessons. The whole universe is created according to the Principle of Justice. However, throughout the history of humanity, many criminals can never receive the full punishment of their crimes in this world. How many innocent people are killed without their murderers ever being found? How many properties are stolen and the thieves are never caught? How much other injustice is done, but cannot be compensated for fairly? Therefore, there has to be a great Day of Judgment in which all tyrants, oppressors, and criminals will be judged with true justice.

STOP AND REFLECT: Have you ever done anything without having a purpose? Even when you are doing absolutely nothing, do you have a purpose for your idleness? For example, when you are resting, or recovering from an illness, etc. Do you think it is possible to do anything at all without an aim or purpose behind it?

Activity 5.4b: Jigsaw Activity



Working in small groups, choose one of the above reasonings for the Day of Judgment. Your group should become experts on proving that reasoning, and expand on your understanding of the concepts involved. After this, explain your argument to the rest of the class as evidence on why there has to be a Day of Accountability.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Islam has put a lot of emphasis on the concept of a Day of Judgment and the Hereafter. *Maʿād* literally means 'the return,' and it includes the gathering together of scattered particles, and the joining of the soul back to the body after its separation. *Maʿād* therefore does not mean that Allah ﷻ will bring something out of non-existence. A question often arises then: How will Allah ﷻ bring us back to life after our body has completely disintegrated?

Once a man called Ibn Abī Khalaf came to the Noble Prophet ﷺ with an old bone in his hand. He was pressing and crushing it with his hand. When it all became powder, he blew it off his hands with his mouth and asked: "Who will make this stuff alive again?"

It was then that the following verse was revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ:

"And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation? Says he: 'Who will give life to the bones when they are decomposed?' Say: 'He will give life to them Who brought them into existence the first time, and He is Cognizant of all creation.'" [7 & 8]

Allah ﷻ brought us into being from nothing. Surely, He can bring us back to life in another realm of creation!

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Is it possible for an inventor or an engineer to disassemble one's invention, or can they only initially put it together? What makes you confident in your answer?

STAGES OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Oftentimes, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ would describe the Day of Judgment to his companions and others. ʿAmru ibn Maʿdi Yakrib was one of the most famous, brave, and courageous warriors among the Arabs. When he was a polytheist, he visited the Noble Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ invited him to Islam, and told him: *"If you believe in Islam, then God Almighty will protect you from the greatest fright on the Day of Judgment."*

ʿAmru asked him: *"O Muḥammad! What is the greatest fright? I am so tough-hearted that nothing can frighten me."*

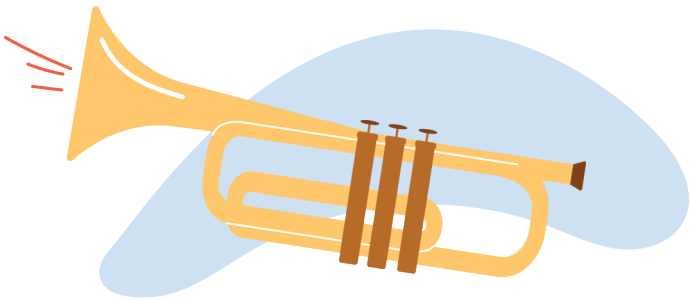
The Noble Prophet ﷺ replied: *"O ʿAmru! It is not so, as you imagine. There will be a tremendously frightening sound, which will make all of the dead come back to life, and make all of the living ones die—except those whom Allah wishes should not die. Then again, there will be a terrible roar which will make all of the dead stand and line up. The sky will become all fragmented. The mountains will all break up and become scattered. Thus, there will be no being whose heart will not be palpating due to fear, remembering the sins committed by themselves. Everyone will be worrying only about their own selves—except those whom Allah wills (they would not become restless)."* [9]

ʿAmru eventually became a Muslim, and demonstrated his warrior skills with the Muslim army.

The Blowing of the Trumpet

We learn from the Noble Qurʾān that the first thing that will happen prior to the Day of Judgment is the blowing of the trumpet (by the Angel Isrāfīl).[10] Every living thing will die, except those whom Allah ﷻ wishes. All of the remaining human beings shall die and also experience *Barzakh*.

Once all of the souls have been taken, the Angel of Death (Izrāīl) will come to Allah ﷻ to report this, and then Allah ﷻ will command that even the Angel of Death should die! Then, the trumpet will be blown for a second time, and everyone will come back to life.



7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yāsīn (36), Verses 78-79.
8 Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, *Tafsīre Nemūnah*, Vol. 18, P. 480.
9 Irbilī, *Kashf al-Ghummah*, P. 228.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 68; and Sūrah an-Naml (27), Verse 87.

Rising from the Graves

One day, Angel Jibrāʾīl came to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and asked him: *"Would you like to observe the condition of people on the Day of Resurrection?"*

"Yes," the Prophet ﷺ replied.

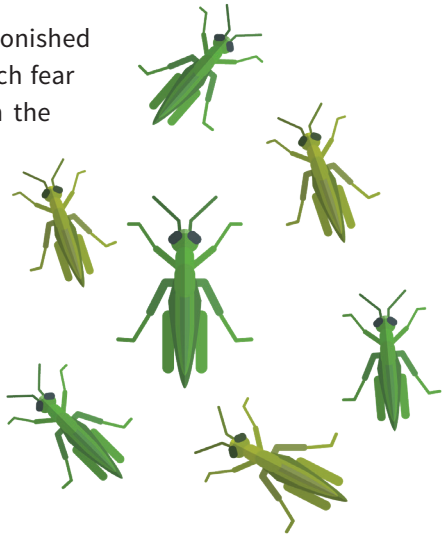
Jibrāʾīl, the trustworthy angel, took Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to the graveyard of Baqīʿ in Medina. He shook a grave and said: *"Get up, by the order of your Lord."* The grave split at once, and a man with a radiant face raised his head from the grave and said: *"(All) praise is due to Allah, Who has made His promise to us come true."*[11]

Thereafter, he shook another grave and said: *"Rise up by the command of your Lord."* At once, another man with a very ugly and frightened face came out of this grave and said: *"O woe to us!"*

Jibrāʾīl said: *"The faithful and the unbelievers will rise up from their graves in this condition."*[12]

Assembly on the Plains of Maḥshar

Upon rising up from the graves, everyone will be astonished at the sight before them. Fear will then set in—such fear that they will wish that they could just flee from the scene. Allah ﷻ says that they will be like '**scattered moths**'[13] or '**spreading locusts**.'[14]



On that Day, everyone will try to hide themselves from one another; and even fathers and mothers will flee from their own children! But their running away will be of no use. Those who had any connection with the Almighty in this world will flee to Allah ﷻ, whereas for others there will be no escape.

Realizing that there is no way out, people will ask each other for some share of their good deeds, but no one will help anyone else as they will all want to keep whatever they have for themselves!

It is for the fear of this Day that we should gather as many righteous deeds as we can for ourselves, and develop a strong relationship with the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ as nothing else will avail us then.

11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 74.
12 *The Hereafter (Maʿād)*, P. 77, from the Chapter: "How will they Raise their Heads from the Graves?"
13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qāriʿah (101), Verse 4.
14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qamar (54), Verse 7.

Activity 5.4c: Illustrate It!

Using the descriptions and details above, draw a scene depicting what the Day of Judgment may look like.

Book of Actions

Soon after rising up from the graves, every individual will be handed one's Book of Deeds/Actions. In general, this Book of Actions is something that each individual, and every nation will carry with them which consists of all of their actions in this world—good or bad. Every single deed, word, and in some cases, thought even, will be recorded. Allah ﷻ says:

> "One utters not a word, but there is with them a watcher at hand (observers who record all of one's actions)." [15]

A man once asked the Imām ؑ if and how the angels know the intentions of faithful people? The Imām ؑ replied: *"As soon as a servant thinks of doing a good deed, their body emanates a pleasing fragrance. So the angels understand it, and they record that good intention. When someone thinks of committing an evil action, then the bad smell of that hurts the angels. If a person thinks of doing something good, then one positive thing is at once noted in their record of deeds. Then, if they carry out that good deed, ten good actions are noted in their record (of deeds)."* [16]

On the Day of Accounting, every soul will read its own Book of Actions. This book will be handed over to its author, i.e., the doer. When you look at your book, you will notice that every single action—accompanied with its real intention—is precisely and accurately engraved in the book. It will be the most comprehensive biography ever of a person's life. It contains the entire existence of a person in this world—from the cradle to the grave. For some:

"...because of what is recorded therein, they will say: 'Ah! Woe to us! What book is this that it leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof [of everything].'" [17]

We learned in previous years that this book will not be like a book we know of in this world. It will be a record of all our deeds, and even our limbs will testify to those actions if need be!

Those who believed and did good in this world will be given their book in their right hand. They will be happy and relieved, and will want others to read their book and will say:

"Surely, I knew I shall meet my account. So they shall be in a life of pleasure." [18]

STOP AND REFLECT: How do you feel when you receive good marks on an exam? How do you think this feeling compares to that which will be experienced by those who receive their Book of Actions in their right hand on the Day of Judgment?

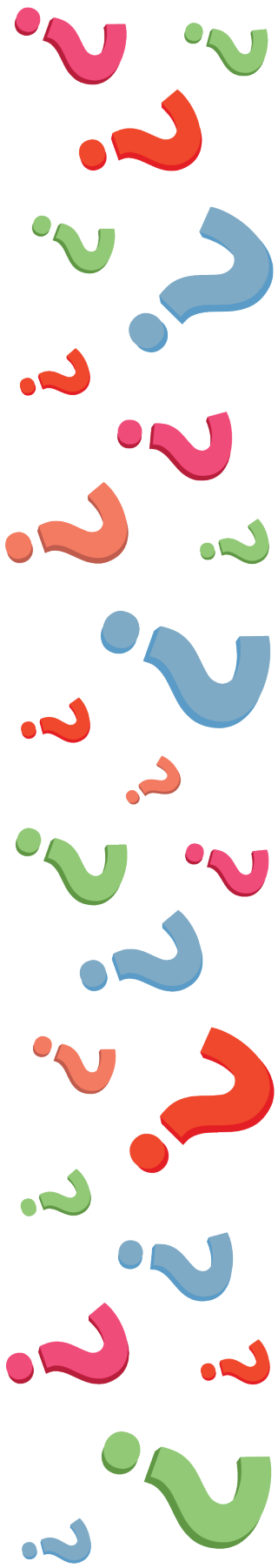
The sinners will be given their Book of Deeds in their left hand. They will be ashamed and will say:

"O, I wish I had not been given my book! And had not known what my account was! O I wish it would have made the end (of me). My wealth has availed me of nothing, and my authority has gone away from me." [19]

15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Qāf (50), Verse 18.
16 *The Hereafter (Maʿād)*, P. 83, from the Chapter: "The Fragrance of Good Intentions Alerts the Angels."
17 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verse 49.
18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥāqqah (69), Verses 20-21.
19 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥāqqah (69), Verses 25-29.

Activity 5.4d: Your Book of Actions

Imagine it is the Day of Judgment, and you have just been given your Book of Actions. What are some of your achievements that you might find there? Design one page with your current achievements, and a second page with some deeds you hope to see there when the Day of Accounting approaches.



Questioning

Before being allowed to proceed through to the next stage which is the Bridge—*Ṣirāṭ*, everyone will be questioned about how they used the bounties and gifts they were given in this world; particularly, how they used their life. Some of these questions will include:

1. How did you spend your life?
2. Which deeds were you engaged with, especially when you were younger?
3. From where and how did you earn money?
4. Where and how did you spend your wealth?

There will also be questioning about the *wilāyah,*[20] and our obedience toward Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think there is a particular focus on the questioning regarding how we used our time when we were young? How can knowing this help us prioritize our commitments? Also, why is it so important to have identified the right leaders [i.e. the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ]?

20 This refers to the leadership/guardianship of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ that we will be questioned about.

5.5 The Hereafter

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Outline some of the characteristics of Heaven and Hell as depicted by the Qurʾān, and the conditions that will determine the duration of stay in either.

THIS TRANSIENT WORLD VS. THE ETERNAL HEREAFTER

We have been put in this temporary world to gather as much provision as we can for that eternal life. The period of time we spend in this world is very short compared to the Hereafter. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلاَّ لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَلَلدَّارُ الآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ ۝

"And this world's life is not but a play and an idle sport, and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who guard (against evil); do you not then understand?" [21]

One of the primary causes of punishment and suffering in the Hereafter is 'love of this world.' We can easily forget about the Hereafter, and focus only on the temporary pleasures of this world. However, in order to be successful both in this world and the Hereafter, we need to detach ourselves from this world and understand that everything we have belongs to Allah ﷻ; and we must use the bounties given to us by the Almighty to purchase a place in Heaven in the next world. This means that we should spend our energy, money, and time to obtain everlasting pleasures in that eternal life, rather than wasting these on the temporary pleasures of this world. Imām ʿAlī ؑ said:

"A person who chases after this world, it will evade them. But if one does not actively seek after it, then it will come toward them. If a person sees through it, then it will bestow them with insight; but if one looks at it (in and of itself), then it will blind them." [22]

How can we try to work more for the Hereafter, and not be too indulged in this world? Here are some tips:

1. Lessen our wishes and desires for this world.
2. Appreciate every blessing that we have been given, and use it the way that Allah ﷻ would be pleased with.
3. Abstain from anything that is forbidden *(ḥarām),* or would earn the displeasure of the Almighty Creator.
4. Do not be preoccupied with what other people possess.

21 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 32.
22 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 82.

To know if we are really attached to this world or not, we can test ourselves to see whether we become upset and flustered when we lose something worldly, or if we become extremely happy when we gain something worldly. Remember, this is not only limited to money and objects, it also applies to popularity and reputation regarding worldly things.

HEAVEN AND HELL

Heaven and Hell are the last stops in the journey of our life. Heaven is the reward for those who believed in the Truth and performed righteous actions. On the other hand, Hell is the punishment for those who denied, altered, or corrupted the Truth, and did evil actions that resulted in mischief and disorder, but never repented.

In the next part, we will learn about the features of Heaven and Hell; and see how we can achieve the neverending Paradise, and avoid the treacherous fire of Hell.

Heaven and Hell Reflect Our Own Actions

From an Islamic point of view, each action has a worldly appearance, as well as a reality that most of us in this world cannot see. The worldly appearance is what is seen in this world, and may or may not be the same as the reality of the action. For example, in the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says the following about taking the rights and possessions of orphans:

"Indeed, those who sinfully devour the property of orphans are only filling their bellies with fire; and for them [in the life to come] they will have to endure a blazing fire!" [23]

The same applies to good actions as well. In a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet ﷺ, it has been narrated that every mention of a Name of Allah ﷻ is like a brick, which is used to build your house or palace in Heaven. The more a person remembers Allah ﷻ and recites His *dhikr*,[24] the bigger the palace the angels will build for that person in Heaven.

It must be remembered though that the realities of our evil actions can be canceled out through sincere repentance, so we should not lose hope if we have sinned in the past. Similarly, the realities of our good actions can be destroyed if we 'burn' them through sins or evil characteristics, such as anger or jealousy. So we should never be proud of our good actions, nor assume that we have done enough for our Hereafter.

Our Heaven and our Hell can expand or shrink based on our actions—the more righteous actions we perform, the bigger our place and pleasures in Heaven will be; and the more evil deeds we do the harsher our chastisement will become. The extent of the pleasures or punishments in both Heaven and Hell will be a result of our choices and actions in this world. If it was not the case, then there would be no purpose in being given the ability to know the differences, and choose between right and wrong.

23 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 10.

24 *Dhikr* is an Arabic word which refers to words or phrases that are mentioned in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ.

Activity 5.5a: Designing Your Hereafter

You are the architect of your home in Paradise. Draw how your ideal home would look like there, then make a list of materials that you will need in order to build your home. Now, attach values to the materials in terms of worldly deeds. For example, one brick could be given the value of a prayer, another for being respectful to your parents, or for helping others, etc. You can use this blueprint as a kind of goal-setting for achieving your dream home in the next world.

A DESCRIPTION OF HEAVEN

It is impossible to describe the real picture of Heaven. Every beautiful thing which we find in this world is lower and of lesser value compared to the bounties of the eternal Paradise. The Noble Qurʾān describes Heaven in about 76 *āyāt* in a way that we gain a limited understanding of the blessings we may enjoy there. However, the reality of Heaven is beyond our imagination. Whatever little we know is limited by language, surroundings, and the capacity of our souls to understand.

Some of the bounties of Paradise have been described in the following way for the people of Heaven:

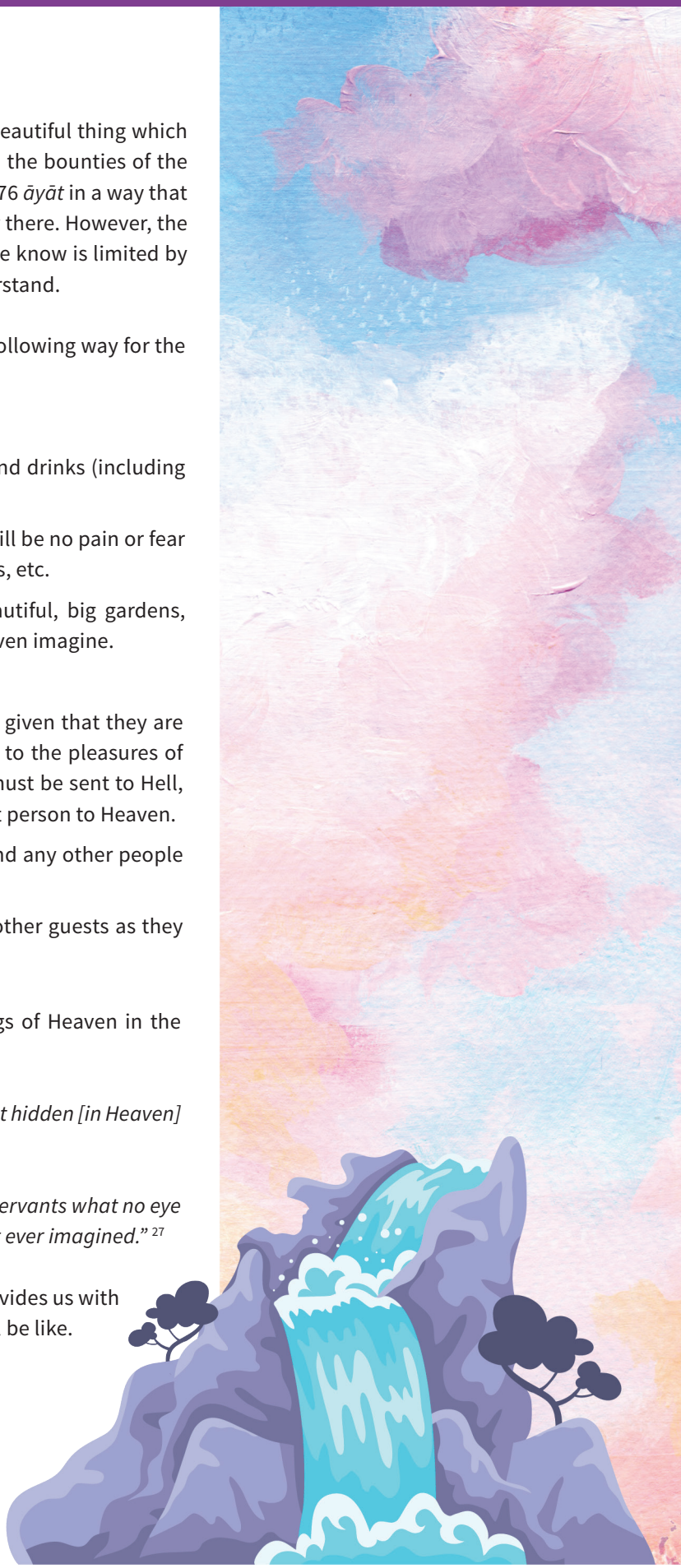
1. The greatest bliss in Heaven will be Allah's proximity.
2. People there will receive numerous kinds of tasty foods and drinks (including fruits) in abundance.
3. They will have full comfort, security, and stability. There will be no pain or fear of anything—no death, no diseases, no poverty, no distress, etc.
4. They will live in big castles. These castles will have beautiful, big gardens, streams, rivers, and many other things which we cannot even imagine.
5. They will enjoy many kinds of entertainment.
6. They will get anything they would like to have. Of course, given that they are in Heaven, they will never want anything that is contrary to the pleasures of Allah ﷻ. That is why once Allah ﷻ decrees that someone must be sent to Hell, the people of Paradise will never request Him to bring that person to Heaven.
7. They will be allowed to visit the Prophets ﷺ, Imāms ﷺ, and any other people they would like to meet.
8. They can invite the Prophets ﷺ, Imāms ﷺ, and as many other guests as they wish all together at one time.

The Noble Qurʾān and the narrations summarize the blessings of Heaven in the following words:

"And no soul knows what enjoyment (comfort) of the eyes are kept hidden [in Heaven] for them as a reward for their good deeds." [25]

Allah ﷻ says in a *Ḥadīth Qudsī* [26] that: *"I have kept ready for My servants what no eye has ever looked at, and no ear has ever heard, nor has any heart ever imagined."* [27]

The beautiful and precious things of this world that Allah ﷻ provides us with are just small samples to give us a glimpse of what Heaven will be like.



25 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah as-Sajdah (32), Verse 17.
26 These are narrations from Allah ﷻ taught to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.
27 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 8, P. 92.

A DESCRIPTION OF HELL

Hell is a deep, wide, and large pit. In it, there will be various kinds of punishments, pains, troubles, hardships, and calamities. They are such that we cannot even imagine them. It is the opposite extreme to Heaven. There will be no room for peace, happiness, or comfort. Below are some of the tortures and punishments that the offenders in Hell will face, as mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān:

The food for the people of Hell will be a bitter and thorny fruit called *Zaqqūm*, which will be melted in fire like copper. *Zaqqūm* will boil in the stomachs of the proud disbelievers like water boiling, or like oil heated over a fierce fire. Then this boiling water will be poured over their heads which will melt all the outer and inner organs of the sinners. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

"Indeed, those who defy (disbelieve in) our signs, we shall soon make them enter a fire; and as often as their skin become scorched, we shall replace them with other skin, so that they may taste the punishment [over and over again]. Indeed Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." [28]

STOP AND REFLECT: What are your reactions to the descriptions of Heaven and Hell? Tell a partner about how each description makes you feel. Are the depictions of Heaven inclusive of some of the most desirable things that this world has to offer?

DURATION OF STAY IN HEAVEN OR HELL

It is mentioned in some of our most famous books of narrations that a companion called Abū Hāshim asked Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ why the dwelling in Heaven or Hell will be permanent? The Imām ﷺ replied:

"The people of Hell will live in Hell forever because their intention in this world was that if they could live in the world forever, they would disobey Allah forever. Likewise, the reason why the people of Heaven will live there permanently is that their intention in this world was that if they could live forever here, they would always obey Allah, and would never defy His commandments." [29]

Therefore, one's intentions in this world will result in the permanent residence of the people of Heaven in Heaven, and the permanent dwelling of the people of Hell in Hell; and Allah ﷻ best knows all of our intentions.

Some people are hardened criminals and deliberate deniers of truth. Despite Allah ﷻ providing them with numerous opportunities to reform themselves and receive His special Mercy—they refuse to take them. Even if they were brought back into this world after seeing the Fire, they would still return to their old ways. They are examples of people who will remain in Hell forever, and are described in the following verse:

> "And those who engaged in disbelief and denied Our signs are the people of Hellfire; they shall dwell in it eternally." [30]

Some punishments are short in duration or may be less painful, while others will last longer and are more severe. The wrongdoers' sins are not the same either in quantity or quality, and the punishments awarded for them also cannot be the same. They will either spend an appropriate amount of time in Hellfire, or receive the kindness and forgiveness of Allah ﷻ. Therefore, some people may be able to leave Hell after a certain period of time, but this only Allah ﷻ knows and He will determine it accordingly.

However, as for Heaven, whoever enters it, will remain there forever. This is a sign of the Mercy of Allah ﷻ. One can only enter Heaven if they are in a state of complete purity. Once they have achieved this state, then they will deserve to stay in Heaven for all of eternity.

"Whoever will inherit al-Firdaus (one of the highest places in Heaven): they will dwell therein [forever]." [31]

28 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 56.
29 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 67, P. 210.
30 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 39.
31 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verse 11.

Activity 5.5b: Review Questions

1. What are the stages of the Day of Resurrection?

2. What are two questions that will be asked on the Day of Judgment?

3. We can work to obtain everlasting pleasures in the Hereafter by:
   a. Lessening our wishes and desires in this world.
   b. Appreciating every blessing.
   c. Abstaining from everything that is forbidden *(ḥarām).*
   d. Not being preoccupied with what other people possess.
   e. All of the above.

4. The realities of our good actions may be destroyed by:
   a. Burning them through sins.
   b. Destroying them through evil characteristics, such as anger or jealousy.
   c. Doing too many deeds for the Hereafter.
   d. a & b

5. The realities of our evil actions can be canceled out through:

FIQH
(ISLAMIC LAWS)

CHAPTER 1

Taqlīd and Taklīf

1.1 Taqlīd

1.1 Taqlīd

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the importance of practical laws in order to practice Islam correctly.
- Understand the process of *Taqlīd*.
- Learn to utilize available resources to learn practical laws according to our *marjaʿ*.
- Analyze the importance of having scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* who help us understand how knowledge of the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ can be applied to our daily lives.

AḤKĀM: the guidelines of ḥalāl and ḥarām

ʿULAMĀʾ: religious scholars

IJTIHĀD: the science of deriving laws

MUJTAHID: a scholar who is qualified to do ijtihād

MARJAʿ: a mujtahid whom others refer to for Islamic rulings

AḤKĀM: A MAP FOR PERFECTION

As Muslims, our purpose in life is to get closer to Allah ﷻ, keep our love for Him strong in our hearts, and tread the path to perfection. Out of His infinite wisdom, Allah ﷻ has given us a map, and a set of instructions to follow, so that we know how to reach this goal. This map is called Islam, and everything which has been outlined in Islam is for our own benefit, and to guide us on this path. The instructions to follow on this map are the rules which Allah ﷻ has laid down, and include permissible *(ḥalāl)* and forbidden *(ḥarām)* things: these are referred to as the **aḥkām** (or rules) of Islam. *Aḥkām* are the laws that help us practice Islam in the correct way to reach our goal.

WHY DO WE NEED ISLAMIC SCHOLARS?

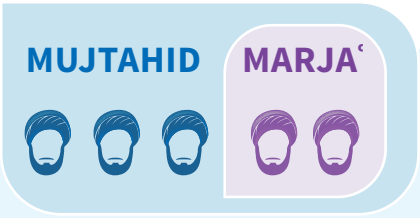
Allah ﷻ has given us some primary guides to help us through this struggle of life, and these include: the Qurʾān, the Prophets ﷺ, and the 12 Imāms ﷺ. However, during this time, we do not have access to our 12th Imām عجل to ask him any questions directly. Therefore, in order to understand our responsibilities and duties better, we need to refer to our religious scholars—the **ʿulamāʾ**. They play a very important role in conveying the knowledge of the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ to us. That is why Imam aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: "The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets."[1]

There are different levels of scholars in Islam. Some scholars, after spending several decades studying Islam with very knowledgeable teachers, become "experts." This means that they reach a level of scholarship where they are qualified to do what is called **ijtihād**. *Ijtihād* is the 'science of deriving laws.' This is similar to how doctors have to go through many years of medical school before they can officially be called doctors. A **mujtahid** is a scholar who is qualified to do *ijtihād*—meaning that they can reliably deduce and infer an Islamic legal opinion from the Qurʾān and other religious sources.

A *mujtahid* derives Islamic laws from four primary resources:

1. The Qurʾān
2. *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah* [traditions and actions of the *Maʿṣūmīn* ﷺ]
3. *ʿAql* [the intellect—along with wisdom, a pure innate nature *(fiṭrah)*, and teachings of the Qurʾān]
4. *Ijmāʿ* [consensus among the scholars]

A *mujtahid* never invents or makes up any Islamic laws. *Ijtihād* is a very precise and difficult process that requires a lot of knowledge, wisdom, and experience. As we can see above, the deriving of laws is based on many authentic sources.



What is the difference between a **mujtahid** and a **marjaʿ**? A *marjaʿ* is a *mujtahid* who can also be relied upon by others to provide an expert Islamic legal opinion. Simply put, a *marjaʿ* is a *mujtahid* whom others can also refer to for their Islamic rulings. Therefore, all *marājiʿ* (the plural of *marjaʿ*) are *mujtahidīn* (the plural of *mujtahid*), but not all *mujtahidīn* are *marājiʿ*—just like how all surgeons are doctors, but not all doctors are surgeons.

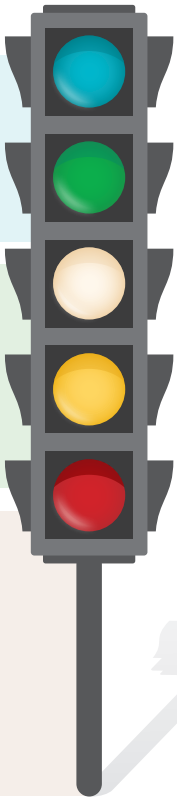
1 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* P. 773.

STOP AND REFLECT:

1. How do the rulings of a *marjaʿ* help us in our day to day lives?
2. Is having a *marjaʿ* who explains the rulings of Islam similar to having a doctor or surgeon who explains health concerns when one is sick? How so?

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Before we begin discussing the process of choosing and following a *marjaʿ*—which is called *taqlīd*—let us review the meanings of some of the words that we will come across when referring to the rulings of a *marjaʿ*:



WĀJIB (OBLIGATORY): These are actions which a person must perform. One will be rewarded for doing them; but by not performing them, one has committed a sin and will be punished. *Examples: reciting our daily prayers (ṣalāh), fasting in the month of Ramaḍān, paying khums.*

MUSTAḤAB (RECOMMENDED): These are actions which are not obligatory, but are loved by Allah ﷻ, earn His pleasure, and strengthen a human being's faith. If a person performs these, they will be rewarded multifold; but if one neglects them, then there is no sin or punishment. *Examples: reciting the Night Prayers (Ṣalātul Layl), doing tasbīḥ after our daily ṣalāh, having some salt before we begin our meals.*

MUBĀḤ (PERMISSIBLE): These are actions that entail neither a reward, nor a punishment. *Examples: drinking a cup of tea, going for a walk.*

NOTE: These actions can often be turned into *mustaḥab* actions, such as drinking water for the sake of Allah ﷻ in order to hydrate and refresh ourselves so that we can perform our other daily activities. They could also be turned into *makrūh* actions, for example if we eat too much food and then we feel sick.

MAKRŪH (REPREHENSIBLE OR DISLIKED): These are actions which are better not to be performed, but they do not have consequences in the Hereafter, although they may have spiritual consequences. Staying away from things that are *makrūh* will entail a reward, but performing then will not be punishable. *Examples: drinking water while standing at night, eating horse meat.*

NOTE: Sometimes, when the word *makrūh* is used, it does not mean that the action is better not to perform. Rather, it means that doing this action will result in less reward. For example, praying *Ṣalātul Jamāʿah* (congregational prayers) behind a leader (an *imām*) who is a traveler is *makrūh*, meaning that one will not receive as much reward if the imām was not a traveler; but it does not mean that it is better to pray alone!

ḤARĀM (FORBIDDEN): These are actions which are not allowed for a person to perform. If one does them, they will be punished and have to face the consequences in the Hereafter; and if one refrains from them, they will be rewarded. *Examples: lying, stealing, backbiting, eating pork.*

Now let us discuss some other terms you may come across:

Pāk/ṭāhir

You may come across this word in the English books of some *marājiʿ*. This is a Farsi or Urdu word for *ṭāhir* or pure. It is often used as the translators of these books have a Farsi background (this word is also common in some other languages as well).

Iḥtiyāṭ Wājib (Obligatory Precaution)

Let us look at an example:

> *Based on obligatory precaution, one should wait until the redness of the sky in the east—which appears after sunset—has disappeared, before performing the Maghrib prayer.*

In the above example,[2] the *marjaʿ* explains the rule regarding the time for Maghrib prayers. He says that it is not sufficient to offer the Maghrib prayers once sunset has occurred, but rather a person must—based on obligatory precaution—wait until the redness in the eastern sky has disappeared. In this case, because of the ruling of "obligatory precaution," his followers can either follow what he has suggested, or follow another *marjaʿ* who is of equal knowledge or the next most knowledgeable, if that second *marjaʿ* has a definite ruling that is not based on obligatory precaution.

Iḥtiyāṭ Mustaḥab (Recommended Precaution)

In this case, a *marjaʿ* believes that there is some evidence which may indicate that precaution is better taken in a certain situation, so he gives a "recommended precaution." This precaution is only a recommendation, so one can follow the initial ruling or the recommendation. *Iḥtiyāṭ Mustaḥab* always accompanies a ruling, meaning, that along with the *marjaʿ* expressing his opinion, he also gives a precautionary measure, and in that ruling, one can act either according to his ruling or the precaution, but is not allowed to refer to another *marjaʿ*. For example: In Ruling 777, Āyatullāh Sīstānī says:

> *When someone makes up a forgotten sajdah or tashahhud, one must cover oneself in the same manner as when they perform prayers, and the recommended precaution is that they should cover themself in this manner when they perform sajdahtā as-sahw as well.*

Here, Āyatullāh Sīstānī has a ruling that if a person is performing *sajdahtā as-sahw*, they do not have to cover themselves in the same as they do during their actual *ṣalāh*. However, it is a recommended precaution to do so. In this situation, the followers of Āyatullāh Sīstānī have a choice of whether or not to act according to the recommended precaution.

REVIEW: HOW TO CHOOSE A MARJAʿ (THE PROCESS OF BEGINNING TAQLĪD)

The process of choosing a *marjaʿ* and then referring to them to find out the correct Islamic rulings is called **Taqlīd**.

As we learned previously, there are three main ways for us to know which *marjaʿ* to follow:

1. A person (such as a learned scholar of Islam) oneself may have the qualifications to identify a *mujtahid*.
2. Other people (such as most ordinary people) can ask two just and learned people who are qualified to identify the most knowledgeable *mujtahid*. An example of such a person may be a senior scholar in your community. If two such people confirm someone is the most learned *marjaʿ*, then we can follow this person as our *marjaʿ*.
3. If a number of people who are learned and qualified to identify a *mujtahid* state that a particular person is the most knowledgeable *marjaʿ*, then we can follow this person as our *marjaʿ*.

2 Summarized and excerpted from Ruling 722 in the *Islamic Laws Book of Āyatullāh Sīstānī*.

STOP AND REFLECT:

1. Do you know the name of a *marjaʿ* or more than one *marjaʿ*?

2. Do you know a scholar you can ask to recommend a *marjaʿ* to you?

ACCESSING THE RULES OF A MARJAʿ: PUTTING TAQLĪD INTO ACTION

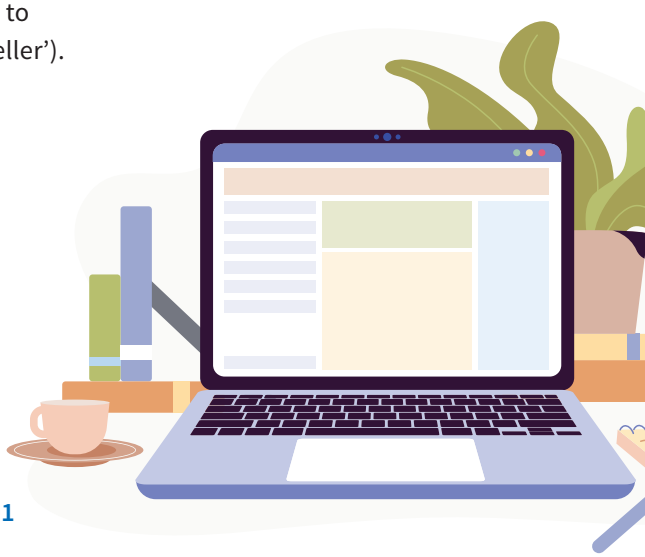
Once we have selected a *marjaʿ*, then we need to know how to find out the rulings in regards to our questions. There are a few ways of doing this:

- Referring to the book of Islamic Laws of that *marjaʿ*—this is usually available in the libraries of most Islamic centers, and it is even online.
- Referring to the website of the *marjaʿ*—here, we can refer to the online version of the rulings.
  - ▹ Books on rulings are usually categorized, so we can find the topic we are looking for and click on the link (e.g. if I am travelling and want to learn about how to shorten my prayers, then I can click on the link that says 'Prayers of a Traveller').
  - ▹ Below are the websites for the rulings of some of the common, present day *marājiʿ*:

Āyatullāh Sīstānī:
https://www.sistani.org/english/book/48/

Āyatullāh Khamenei:
https://www.leader.ir/en/book/32/Practical-Laws-of-Islam

Āyatullāh Makārim Shīrāzī:
https://makarem.ir/main.aspx?lid=1&typeinfo=30&catid=9001



- Referring to the Q&A section of their website. Again, this usually has categories. For example, if we want to know about what type of music is forbidden, then we can click on the link 'Music' or 'Musical instruments.'
- Refer to the application ("app") on our smartphone. An example is the app for the rulings of Āyatullāh Sīstānī under the name "iSistani."
- We can ask a qualified scholar in our community to explain some rulings to us, and if they do not know the answers, then they can refer to the *marjaʿ* themselves and come back to us with an answer. Often, when we have difficult questions, this is the best way to get a correct answer. Another way of getting some answers is by referring to Q&A websites run by qualified scholars. Some examples are listed in the sidebar.

www.moulanaonline.com

www.askthesheikh.com

www.islamquest.net

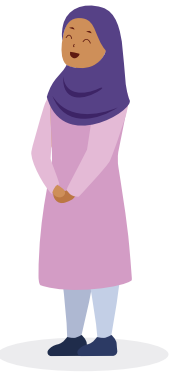
- We can also learn the rulings of our *marjaʿ* by:
  - ▹ Hearing it from a person we trust who knows the verdicts of the *marjaʿ*.
  - ▹ Hearing it from the *marjaʿ* himself or his reliable representative.

CONDITIONS OF BEING A MARJAʿ

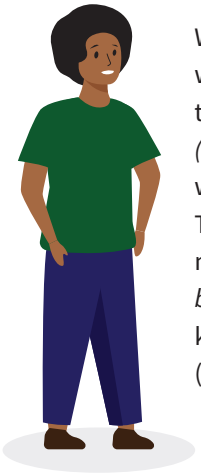
In order to become a *marjaʿ*, a person must meet nine requirements which are:

1. Male.
2. Sane.
3. Shīʿah Ithnā ʿAsharī [a Shīʿah who believes in all of the 12 Imāms ﷺ, as opposed to certain Shīʿahs who only believe in some of the Imāms ﷺ].
4. Of legitimate birth.
5. Mature *(mukallaf)*.
6. Just.[3]
7. The most learned on issues where *marājiʿ* have different opinions.
8. *Al-ʿAql:* meaning that he is in sound mind, and is not suffering from any kind of memory loss like Alzheimers or Dementia, etc.
9. Living (for those who choose a *marjaʿ* for the first time, he must be alive).

TAKLĪF



Taklīf is the age when we become responsible for all of the actions that we perform. Once we reach this age, we must start following the rules of Islam. This is the time in our lives when Allah ﷻ is inviting us to the honor of worshiping Him. He says that at this time, we are able to get to know Him and serve Him with our actions. We usually try to impress and do as much as we can for a best friend, or someone we think is extremely important. What about trying to impress and serve the One who created us, protects us, and guides us so caringly throughout our lives?



When we become responsible for our actions, we have to perform all of the obligatory *(wājib)* things and stay away from the forbidden *(ḥarām)* things. At this age, the angels start to write down all of our good and bad actions. The record of these will be shown to us in the next world. When we reach the age of *taklīf* or *bulūgh* (as it is also referred to as), then we are known as *mukallaf* (for a boy) or *mukallafah* (for a girl).

Activity 1.1a: Reflection

1. What might be a good way to prepare for this time in your life?

2. What is something you would like to do to ensure that you are making responsible choices which are in line with the Islamic teachings?

3 A person is said to be just when they perform all of those acts that are obligatory upon them, and refrain from all of those things that are forbidden. A sign of being just is that one is apparently of good character, such that if enquiries are made about them from the people of their locality, their neighbors, or those whom they live with, they would confirm that person's good conduct. In addition, given the sensitivity and significance of the position of being a *marjaʿ*, one is required to have full control over his desires, and restrain from worldly aspirations, based on obligatory precaution.

Activity 1.1b: Taqlīd Review Worksheet

Circle the correct answer for the questions below:

1. Which of the following is NOT true?
   a. A *marjaʿ* must be a Muslim Shīʿah Ithnā ʿAsharī
   b. A *marjaʿ* can be a male or female
   c. A *marjaʿ* must be of legitimate birth

2. A *marjaʿ* must be just. This means that:
   a. He is fair and does not cheat
   b. He performs all of obligatory actions, and refrains from acts which are forbidden
   c. He is knowledgeable

3. A *mujtahid* is:
   a. Any scholar who has studied for at least 10 years
   b. A scholar who is older and more experienced
   c. A person who has the capability to deduce rulings from the religious sources and evidence

4. We can choose or find a *marjaʿ* by:
   a. Asking two qualified scholars to identify a *marjaʿ*
   b. Following someone who is well-known in the Shīʿah community as a *marjaʿ*
   c. Both a & b are correct

Reread the lesson independently, and fill in the blank(s) for the following:

5. A *mujtahid* derives Islamic Laws from the Qurʿān, _____, and _____.

6. A _____ never _____ or makes up Islamic Laws.

7. Obligatory precaution is when a _____ does not have a _____ ruling on a particular issue.

8. Once we reach the age of _____, we must start following the rules of Islam.

Activity 1.1c: Scenarios

1. Ahmad knows that certain types of music are okay to listen to, while other types of music are not. He wants to know the details of the rules related to music. Discuss how he can go about doing this. Refer to section 1 of this lesson.

2. Ahmad did some research last year on choosing a *marjaʿ*. He ended up choosing to follow Āyatullāh Sīstānī. He knows that Āyatullāh Sīstānī has a website and a book that explains the rules. Recently though, he found out that there is also a phone application that he can use to find out the rulings.

   Go to the app store on your phone. Download the app iSistani.

   Now in the search bar at the top type in "music." From the search results scroll down to ruling 535. Click on this.

3. Continuing to use the search results from the app in question 2, read through the rulings 535-543 that come up as a search result.

   What does the term *"ḥalāl"* mean in ruling 538?

   What does the term *"ḥarām"* mean in ruling 541?

4. **TERM REVIEW**

Within the app, search for rulings in regards to something that you are interested in knowing about, for example: clothing, *ḥalāl* food, etc., and find something that is **wājib**, **mustaḥab**, **mubāḥ**, **makrūh**, and **ḥarām** within this category.

In your own words, explain what each ruling means.

CHAPTER 2

Purity and Spirituality

2.1 Ṭahārah and Najāsah

2.2 Wuḍūʾ, Ghusl, Tayammum

2.1 Ṭahārah and Najāsah

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explore the concept of cleanliness as a very important part of Islam, particularly when it comes to ritual purity—*ṭahārah*, and ritual impurity—*najāsah*.
- Define *ʿayn an-najāsah* and outline these core impurities which may require a special process for purification when made contact with.
- Discuss the transference of *najāsah* to *ṭāhir* objects, and how to contain the chain of *najāsah*.
- Outline the steps needed to verify whether an object is *najis*—impure, or *ṭāhir*—pure.
- Describe the steps necessary to make a *najis* object become *ṭāhir*, and identify any exceptions.
- Review guidelines for emptying the bladder and bowel in order to maintain *ṭahārah*—ritual cleanliness.
- Explore the use of soil, rock, and sand to achieve *ṭahārah*.

NAJIS THINGS

Cleanliness is a very important part of Islam. When we say that something is clean, we generally mean that it is free from any dirt. For example, if we wash a shirt that has dirt or food stains on it, we would consider it then to be 'physically clean.' In Islam, physical cleanliness is important. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَّهِّرِينَ ۝

"And Allah loves those who purify themselves."[1]

However, there is another dimension of cleanliness known as 'ritual purity' which is known as *ṭahārah*. Ritual purity is a requirement that is needed in order to maintain our connection with Allah ﷻ; but ritual impurity which is known as *najāsah* acts as a barrier between us and Allah ﷻ. As a result, things which have become impure must be made pure, or clean—in a special way as outlined by Islam.

It is important to note that *najāsah* does not mean the same thing as 'unclean.' For example, mud might be dirty and thus unclean, but it is not necessarily *najis*. If you clean blood off of a counter with an alcohol wipe, the counter might now be clean, but it is still considered as being *najis*.

It is good to remain free from any *najāsah* at all times, whenever possible. However, when it comes to certain rituals such as the daily *ṣalāh*, it is obligatory *(wājib)* for one's body and clothes to be ritually pure *(ṭāhir)*. The only exception to this is *Ṣalātul Janāzah* (the prayer for the deceased one) which is when you pray for someone before they are buried, for which you do not need to be in a state of *wuḍūʾ* or *ṭahārah* to perform the prayer.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

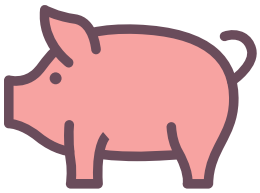
Can you think of another example of something that seems dirty, but it is *ṭāhir* in the Islamic sense? What about something that appears clean, but is actually *najis*?

NAJIS ENTITIES (ʿAYN AN-NAJĀSAH)

Something that is not ritually pure *(ṭāhir)* is considered to be ritually impure *(najis)*. There are certain things that are inherently *najis* and can make other things *najis* as well. These things are called *ʿayn an-najāsah*, which means that they are inherently, thus always *najis*—they cannot ever be made *ṭāhir*. Something that is usually *ṭāhir*, like your body or a t-shirt, can become *najis* through contact with one of the *ʿayn an-najāsah*.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tawbah (9), Verse 108.

CHART OF THE ʿAYN AN-NAJĀSAH

NAJIS ITEM	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
URINE AND STOOL	The urine and stool of human beings, and any animals whose blood gushes forth is *najis*. Animals whose meat is *ḥalāl* to eat are an exception to this. As well, according to a number of *marājiʿ*, the droppings of birds are not *najis*, even if their flesh is *ḥarām* to eat.	Urine and stool of rabbits, hamsters, and cats are all *najis*.
BLOOD	The blood of human beings, and animals whose blood gushes forth is *najis*. The blood of animals whose blood does not gush forth when slaughtered, including fish, is *ṭāhir*.	The blood of a chicken is *najis*.
DEAD BODY	The dead body of a person (who has not yet been given the special *ghusl*), or an animal (which has not been slaughtered Islamically) is *najis*. The parts of the body of such an animal including its skin/hide are also *najis*. The only exception is the corpse of an animal whose blood does not gush forth when slaughtered (e.g. fish). Animals which are *ḥalāl* to eat and which are slaughtered Islamically are not *najis*. NOTE: If we touch a dead person's body after it has gone cold and before it has been given the *ghusl*—even if there is no transfer of wetness, we must perform a *ghusl* for having touched a deceased body.	The dead body of a Muslim becomes *ṭāhir* after it is given the ritual bathing *(ghusl)* for a dead body. A dead fish is *ṭāhir* even if it died in the water.
DOGS AND PIGS 	Dogs and pigs living on land are *najis*. Their hair, nails, teeth, bones, and sweat are also *najis*. If a person touches a dog or a pig, and they or the animal are wet, then the body part which touched the animal will become *najis*, and needs to be made *ṭāhir*. If after coming into contact with a dog or a pig, a piece of their hair is stuck in our clothes and it becomes wet, then this will make our clothes *najis*.	Any products, including food items, produced from these animals are *najis*. We need to be careful about this when eating or buying food as many items contain porcine (pigs) or aspic (beef) gelatine.

NAJIS ITEM	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
KĀFIR **[A Disbeliever, does not include People of the Book (Ahlul Kitāb) like Christians or Jews]** 	In Islamic law, a *kāfir* (or more precisely, *kāfir fiqhī*) is a person who has not recited the first two lines of the *shahādah*,[2] and hence has not become a Muslim. This is different from a *kāfir* whom the Qurʾān speaks about, who is someone who knows the truth of Islam, but decides to reject it; or rejects Allah and is ungrateful to Him because of one's inner malice. The meaning of *kāfir* in Islamic law is more general, but in the Qurʾān, its meaning is much more specific. Most *marājiʿ*, like Āyatullāh Khamenei and Āyatullāh Sīstānī, state that the People of the Book *(Ahlul Kitāb)*, meaning the Jews and Christians, are *ṭāhir*. Nonetheless, regardless of the type of *kāfir* a person is, it is important that we still respect and show kindness to them, as they are the creations of Allah ﷻ. As Imām ʿAlī ؑ beautifully said: "There are two kinds of people in this world: they are either your brothers and sisters in Islam, or your peers in humanity."[3] Even if the person is not Muslim, never think that you are better than them; they might revert one day; or due to their circumstances, they might be forgiven by Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment.	If a Muslim shakes hands with an atheist and one of their hands is wet, then their hand will now be *najis* (as per *iḥtiyāṭ wājib*—according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī).
WINE AND BEER 	Wine and other alcoholic drinks which intoxicate a person are *najis*. If they come into contact with food, then the food will become *najis*.	Islamic law about alcohol is so strict that if wine is being served on a table, then it is forbidden to even sit at that table, even if one does not touch the wine.

2 Lā ilāha illallāh, Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh.
3 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Letter #53.

Activity 2.1a: ʿAyn an-Najāsah Match-Up

Draw a line to connect each item to its corresponding state of ritual purity or impurity.

NAJIS

- Urine and stool of human beings, and any animals whose blood gushes forth (excluding birds and animals whose meat is *ḥalāl* to eat)
- Dirt and grass stains
- Wine and other alcoholic drinks that intoxicate a person
- Fish blood
- Mold and mildew
- Food that has come into contact with wine or beer
- Salad dressing made with wine
- The *Ahlul Kitāb*, who are Jews and Christians
- An atheist in a swimming pool
- The hair, nails, teeth, bones, and sweat of dogs and pigs
- Food made from *ḥalāl* animals
- The blood of human beings and animals whose blood gushes forth
- A *kāfir*—meaning one who has not recited the first two lines of the *shahādah*
- The dead body of a person or an animal whose blood gushes forth
- Food made from certain parts of a dog or a pig
- A dead fish
- Your hands after petting a dry dog with dry hands
- The dead body of a Muslim after it was given the necessary *ghusl*
- The droppings of birds

ṬĀHIR
(even though it may be dirty)

HOW IS NAJĀSAH TRANSFERRED?

When something that is *najis* comes into contact with something that is *ṭāhir*, the *ṭāhir* thing will also become *najis* (under certain conditions) and should then be purified. However, it must be noted that the *najāsah* will only be transferred if either of the two things is wet or moist to such an extent that the wetness is transferred. If both things are dry, then the *najāsah* will not be spread. For example, if a person touches a dog that is dry with a dry hand, then one's hand will remain *ṭāhir*. However, if either object is wet and the two things come into contact, then the *najāsah* will spread from one item to the other. For example if a person touches a dog while their hands are sweaty or wet, then their hands will become *najis*. If their hands then touch a wet sink, that sink will also become *najis*. The transfer of *najāsah* only goes on for two or three steps at most, depending on the item and the ruling of your *marjaʿ*. Thus, this transfer of *najāsah* does not continue forever, from one thing to another, even if all of the things are wet.

STOP AND REFLECT: Can you think of another example of how *najāsah* might be transferred to a *ṭāhir* object? What is a good rule or strategy for containing *najāsah* in order to prevent it from spreading, or transferring more than once?

WAYS OF PROVING NAJĀSAH

Sometimes, people are very worried about *najāsah*, and this can make the rulings even more difficult than they are meant to be. To avoid this, Islam has set clear guidelines to prove whether something has become *najis* or not.

There are some important ways of proving whether a thing has become *najis* or not. These are basic and simple ways which are very practical and flexible in any environment that we may find ourselves in. Here is where you can see the true ease which Allah ﷻ intends for us.

Before we proceed, it is very important to always remember the following principle that we have learned from the teachings of our Prophet ﷺ and Imāms ؑ: "Everything is ritually pure *(ṭāhir)* until you know that it has become ritually impure *(najis)*."[4]

There are three ways of proving that a thing has become *najis*:

1. One should be sure, or truly satisfied that something is *najis*. If a person merely suspects or doubts that something might be *najis*, then this does not make it as such. For example, if you visit the mall and sit on a bench that is wet, or step on something that is wet, if you do not know for sure that the wetness was due to something *najis*, it is not necessary to purify your clothes or shoes.
2. If a person who is in possession of an object says that it is *najis*, then that item can be considered as being *najis*. For example, if a Muslim cook says that a particular utensil or any other object which they were handling became *najis*, then it will be accepted as being *najis*.
3. If one or more just or reliable people state that something has become *najis*, and give the reason for it becoming *najis*, or you believe them to be honest, then you can take that item as being *najis*.

If you are sure that something is *najis*, then you should consider it as being such until you have certainty that it has now become *ṭāhir*. For example: you are sure that your shirt had some blood on it yesterday, but now you are not certain whether you purified it or not. In this case, you should make it *ṭāhir* again.

The opposite also applies. If you are sure that something is *ṭāhir*, you should consider it as such unless you gain certainty that it has become *najis*. You do not need to investigate any further.

4 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 3, P. 467.

Activity 2.1b: Scenarios For General Ṭahārah and Najāsah

We have learned the following principle from our Prophet ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ:

"Everything is ṭāhir until you know that it has become najis."[5]

Describe two scenarios in which this can be applied, different from the examples provided in the lesson.

5 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah,* Vol. 3, P. 467.

MAKING NAJIS THINGS ṬĀHIR

In previous years, we learned that there are various agents that can help make things that have become *najis*, *ṭāhir* once again, and an important agent is water. In this lesson, we will review some of the rules that we learned in previous years, as well as some additional rules regarding the process of making things *ṭāhir*.

CATEGORIES OF WATER

	Kurr Water	Qalīl Water
Description	*Kurr* water is a body of water whose volume is equivalent to a cube that is 3.5 hand spans wide, long, and deep, or about 384 litres or 101 US gal.	*Qalīl* water is water that is less than *kurr*.
Examples	*Lakes, rivers, large swimming pools, large ponds, water from faucets/taps.*	*Buckets, cups, watering cans.*
If najāsah falls into this, then what happens?	If *najāsah* falls into *kurr* water, then the water is still considered *ṭāhir*, as long as the smell, taste, and color of the water does not change. The water will become *najis* if the smell, taste, or color of it changes.	If *najāsah* falls into *qalīl* water, then the *qalīl* water will become *najis*, no matter what. If you pour *qalīl* water over the *najāsah*, then the water that drops after making contact with that thing will be *najis*.
Examples	*If a drop of blood falls into a standard swimming pool, then the water will still be considered ṭāhir because the swimming pool is an example of kurr water.*	*If you are helping in the kitchen and you cut yourself, and your blood drips into a pot of water, then that water is now najis, even if its color does not change.*

CONDITIONS OF WATER FOR ṬAHĀRAH

In order to ritually purify anything with water, the water used must meet two conditions:

1. It must be *ṭāhir*.
2. It must be *muṭlaq*: which means that it must be plain water—not mixed with any other substance in a way that it would no longer be called "water." Water which is mixed with another substance in a way that it can no longer be called "water" is referred to as *muḍāf* (mixed).

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What are some examples of *muḍāf* substances, or fluids which cannot be called "water?"

THE PROCESS OF MAKING SOMETHING ṬĀHIR

In general, for something to be made pure by water, the following two things must happen:

1. The *najis* substance *(ʿayn an-najāsah)* should first be removed or washed away. Particles of the *najāsah* (e.g. blood, urine, etc…) should not remain on the object after it has been washed. If some color or smell remains (like a light stained color), then this is okay, as long as the actual particles have been removed. For example, after washing blood off of a shirt, it is okay if there is still a stain on the shirt. In that case, the actual *najis* thing (the blood) will be considered as having been washed off, and the only thing left is the color that it left behind.
2. Now, it should be washed with plain water once, twice, three times, or seven times—depending on how it became *najis*. See the table below for more details.

TERMINOLOGY REVIEW

Najis	Things that are *najis* are impure according to the rules of Islam.
Ṭāhir	Things that are *ṭāhir* are those which are pure according to the rules of Islam.
Muṭahhir	These are those things that can make a *najis* thing *ṭāhir* again; for example: water.
Mutanajjis	This is the term given to an item that was *ṭāhir* in itself, but it became *najis* because of coming into contact with a *najis* thing.

SPECIAL CASES

When it comes to clothes and utensils, certain special rules apply. Here are some of the most important examples:

- If our body or clothes become *najis* with urine, then they must be washed **at least twice**.
- If the interior of a dish or cookware (e.g. pot or plate) becomes *najis*, in some circumstances it must be washed **three times** (see details below). We must pour water inside of the cookware, then throw that water out, and repeat this three times.
- If we are using *qalīl* water to purify clothes, rugs, or similar things, we must **wring or squeeze** the clothes after each washing so that the water remaining in it is squeezed out.[6]

TYPE OF NAJĀSAH	PROCESS FOR MAKING IT ṬĀHIR
***Najis* things in general**	Remove or wash away the *najis* substance *(ʿayn an-najāsah)*, then wash the affected area once.
Body has become *najis* by urine	Two washes.
Interior of a dish becomes *najis*	Āyatullāh Sīstānī: Wash three times as an obligatory precaution whether using *qalīl* or *kurr* water. Āyatullāh Khamenei: Wash three times if using *qalīl* water, and once if using *kurr* water.
A dish from which a dog licks or drinks from	The inside of the dish should be scrubbed with pure *(ṭāhir)* soil, then the soil should be discarded, and the utensil washed two times with water.
Clothing and rugs which have become *najis* by urine	At least two washes. The water should be squeezed out in between if one is using *qalīl* water. Note: Washing clothes in an automatic washing machine is sufficient for making them *ṭāhir*.

6 According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, wringing/squeezing is necessary even for *kurr* water, as per obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*.

Activity 2.1c: Clean the Najis Items

Describe the process for making the following *najis* items *ṭāhir*.

1. A pot used to defrost non-*ḥalāl* raw beef.

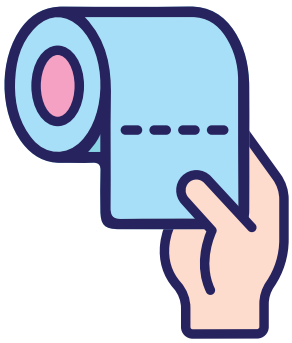
2. A small cut on your finger.

3. A rubber ball that a dog has chewed.

4. The bedsheets of a child who is potty-training and has urinated on them.

5. A child's t-shirt that has become soiled with blood after a nosebleed.

RULES OF EMPTYING THE BLADDER AND BOWEL



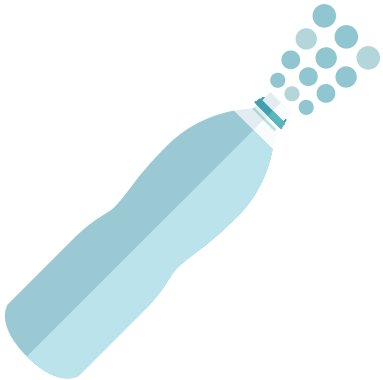
As an obligatory precaution, it is not permissible to keep the front or back of one's body toward the *qiblah* while relieving oneself. Knowing the direction of the *qiblah* is therefore necessary before using a bathroom.

It is obligatory *(wājib)* for a person to cover one's private parts when using the bathroom from other people (except one's spouse), and at other times, from anyone who is *mukallaf* (those who have reached the age of religious maturity) even if they are *maḥram* to the person.

The following are the rules of making oneself *ṭāhir* after emptying the bowel and bladder:

Urine The urinary outlet does not become pure with anything other than water, and washing it once is sufficient, although the recommended precaution is that it should be washed twice, and it is even better to wash it three times.

Feces If the rear part is washed with water, one should ensure that no trace of feces are left on it. However, there is no harm if the color and smell remain. If it is washed thoroughly in the first instance, leaving no particles of stool, then it is not necessary to wash it again.



USING A PUBLIC BATHROOM

If we are using a public bathroom at school, in the mall, or anywhere else, it is still possible to maintain *ṭahārah*. Here are some tips for this situation:

- Choose a bathroom or stall that does not have any obvious, visible *najāsah* on it.
- Take a bottle of water with you, and fill it up from the sink before going into the bathroom stall.
- Use that water to make the private parts *ṭāhir*.

USING THE EARTH FOR ṬAHĀRAH

The earth here means surfaces such as soil, rock, or sand. If a person's feet or shoes become *najis* from a *najāsah* that was on the earth or ground itself, then they can be made *ṭāhir* by walking on the ground. They need to walk at least ten steps, and in the process of walking, allow the *najāsah* to disappear from their feet or shoes.

Example: Ali was walking back from school when he noticed that he stepped on dog waste while walking on the grass. Next to the grass there was a dirt patch, so Ali rubbed his shoes on this dirt patch as he walked through it in order to get rid of the waste. After walking about 15 steps, he got rid of the excrement. In this way, Ali was able to make his shoes become *ṭāhir* once again.

However, the rule is that we cannot make our shoes or feet *ṭāhir* from any *najāsah* that did not come from the earth. For example, if some blood drops from a cut in your hand, and lands on the bottom of your shoes while you are seated. You decide to make your shoes *ṭāhir*, so you walk on some dirt for a while. Will this make your shoes *ṭāhir*? No it will not, because the blood did not come from what was already on the ground—it came from your hand. If however, there was blood already on the ground and a person stepped on it with their shoes, then they can then their shoes *ṭāhir* by walking the required distance.

We should also remember that the earth cannot make things like our pants or other parts of our body *ṭāhir*.

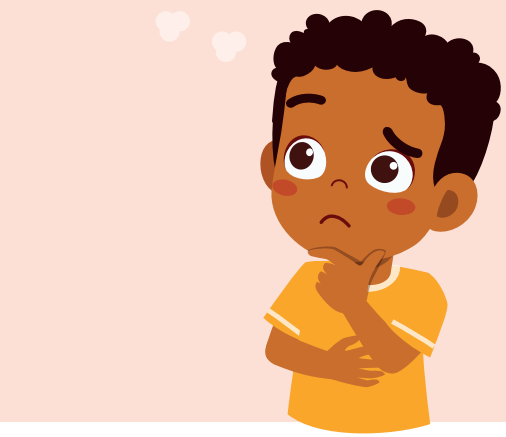
As well, the earth you are using to make your feet or shoes *ṭāhir* should be dry and *ṭāhir* itself.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some examples of *najāsāt* that can be found on the earth or ground? What examples of impure things can you think of that cannot be made ṭāhir by the earth?

DOUBTS

Often we face situations of doubt when it comes to *najāsah* and *ṭahārah*. In such situations, it is very important to remember the following rules:

1. If you previously knew that something was *ṭāhir*, then you should consider it to still be *ṭāhir* until you are sure that it has become *najis*.
2. If you previously knew something was *najis*, then you should consider it to still be *najis* until you are sure that it has become *ṭāhir*.
3. In the case where you do not know whether something was previously *ṭāhir* or *najis*, you should consider it to be *ṭāhir* (unless it is one of the *ʿayn an-najāsah*).



Activity 2.1d: Review Questions

1. *Najāsah* is transferred from one object to another when:
   a. The two objects come into contact with each other.
   b. The two objects come into contact with each other and at least one of them is wet or moist.
   c. The two things thoroughly mix with each other.

2. I enter the toilet at school and the floor is wet. In relation to this situation, which of the following is true?
   a. Everything is *najis* unless we know that it is *ṭāhir*.
   b. Everything is *ṭāhir* unless we know that it has become *najis*.
   c. If we are not sure, we have to investigate whether that thing is pure or impure.

3. Dogs and pigs:
   a. Are all *ṭāhir*.
   b. Are all *najis*.
   c. Only small poodle dogs are *ṭāhir*.

4. If I am washing my *najis* clothes (that became impure by blood) with my hands by water:
   a. I need to wring the clothes after washing them.
   b. I only need to wring the clothes if I am using *qalīl* water (such as with a jug full of water).
   c. I do not need to wring the clothes at all.

5. If I knew something was *ṭāhir* previously, but now I am not sure if it is still pure or not, then:
   a. I should assume that it is *najis*.
   b. I should assume that it is *ṭāhir*.
   c. I should do an investigation to find out.

6. If my clothes become *najis* with urine, then I have to:
   a. Wash them twice.
   b. Wash them twice only if I am using *qalīl* water.
   c. Wash them only once.

Activity 2.1e: Critical Analysis and Practice Activity

Split into groups of three. For each of the following scenarios, discuss how you would make the object that has become *najis*, *ṭāhir* once again, and then present your answers to the class.

1. A shirt became *najis* because urine splashed on it. I only have a small water bottle with which to make it *ṭāhir*. What steps do I need to follow in this case?

2. A dog wanders into my front yard and drinks from a bowl of water. What steps do I need to follow to make the bowl *ṭāhir*?

3. I am sure that my jacket was *ṭāhir*. It fell onto the wet ground, so now I am not sure if it has become *najis* or not. Do I consider my jacket to be *ṭāhir* or *najis*?

4. I am sure that my sock became *najis* due to the blood which was coming out from a wound on my foot. I cannot remember if I made it *ṭāhir* or not. Do I consider this sock of mine to be *ṭāhir* or *najis*?

2.2 Wuḍūʾ, Ghusl, Tayammum

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Detail the steps necessary to achieve purity through *wuḍūʾ*.
- Outline the conditions under which *wuḍūʾ* is necessary.
- Detail the correct conditions under which performing *wuḍūʾ* is valid.
- Describe the invalidators of *wuḍūʾ* and how to address doubts about *wuḍūʾ*.
- Define *wuḍūʾ jabīrah*, and describe the ways in which it can be used to resolve some special circumstances.
- Define *ghusl* as the washing of the entire body in a certain manner with the intention of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ.
- Differentiate between the two types of *ghusl*: *irtimāsī* and *tartībī*.
- Discuss the circumstances under which *tayammum* needs to be performed in order to purify ourselves, and detail the process for this act.

Practical Demonstration of Wuḍūʾ:

https://youtu.be/HFwMLNE90oQ

In the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ tells us:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

"O you who believe! When you stand up for prayer, wash your faces and your hands to the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles."[1]

In this verse, Allah ﷻ is telling us to wash and wipe parts of our bodies in a certain way. This process is called *wuḍūʾ*. Literally, the term *wuḍūʾ* means 'cleanliness.' Through *wuḍūʾ*, a person attains spiritual purity, cleanses both the soul and the body, and is now able to perform certain acts of worship. Later on, we will learn about *tayammum*, which is done in specific cases, and is done with parts of the earth (such as soil, or sand, etc.)

PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF WUḌŪʾ

We will start the lesson with a practical demonstration of *wuḍūʾ* by your teacher and/or by watching a video. Below is a link to a practical demonstration of *wuḍūʾ*.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 6.

WHEN TO PERFORM WUḌŪʾ

We need to perform *wuḍūʾ*, or be in the state of *wuḍūʾ* for certain things, some of which include:

- Our daily prayers *(ṣalāh)*, and all of the other *ṣalāh* except *Ṣalātul Mayyit*.
- Before we touch the actual script of the Qurʾān.
- For *wājib ṭawāf*.
- Before we touch the Names or Attributes of Allah ﷻ in any language. According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, it is *iḥtiyāṭ wājib* not to touch the name of the Prophet ﷺ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ without *ṭaḥārah*; and according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, it is *iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab* to avoid doing this without being in a state of ritual purity.

It is also recommended to be in a state of *wuḍūʾ* for the following things:

- Before any act of worship, such as reciting the Qurʾān or a *duʿāʾ*.
- Before going to sleep.
- While you are studying.
- For *mustaḥab ṭawāf*.
- When going for the *ziyārah* of any of the *Maʿṣūmīn* ﷺ.
- When visiting any graves.
- All of the time whenever it is possible.

مَنْ تَطَهَّرَ ثُمَّ أَوَى إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ بَاتَ وَ فِرَاشُهُ كَمَسْجِدِهِ

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:
"A person who sleeps after performing wuḍūʾ, the bed on which one sleeps will be like a masjid [in which one is worshiping throughout the night]."[2]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why does Islam place so much emphasis on cleanliness and purification before certain acts?

2 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 1, P. 378.

CONDITIONS OF WUḌŪʾ

When we are about to perform *wuḍūʾ*, we need to remember the following rules:

1. The water we use, and the place that we are doing *wuḍūʾ* must be **mubāḥ**—which means that we must have permission to use them. We should also be careful not to waste water.
2. The water we use must be plain, pure water *(muṭlaq)*, not mixed *(muḍāf)*, and it must be *ṭāhir*.
3. Before we start *wuḍūʾ*, the parts of our body which we will wash or wipe during *wuḍūʾ* must be *ṭāhir*. So if a person had a cut on their arm and there is still some blood left on it, then they need to wash the blood off and purify that place. This is not necessary for those parts that are not washed in *wuḍuʾ*, such as your shoulder, but you must purify those parts before *ṣalāh*.
4. **Muwālāt**: This means that you cannot have long gaps in between the different sections of *wuḍūʾ*.
5. **Tartīb**: This means that you must perform the actions of *wuḍūʾ* in the correct order, which will be discussed in the next section.
6. You must perform *wuḍūʾ* by yourself. No one can help another person in washing or wiping, unless one is unable to do a particular action by themself, due a severe medical condition, or a certain surgery, etc. Receiving help in the preliminaries for washing is *makrūh*, but permissible; so for example, if someone pours water into our hand then we use that to wash our face.
7. We should perform *wuḍūʾ* with the intention of attaining proximity to Allah ﷻ, and obeying His commands.
8. Using water must not be harmful for the person. If water is harmful to us, then we need to perform *tayammum* to achieve *ṭahārah*.
9. There must not be any obstruction for the water to reach the parts of our body on which *wuḍūʾ* is performed. Things like paint, nail polish, or makeup that would cause a barrier need to be removed first.

THINGS WHICH MAKE OUR WUḌŪʾ VOID

A person remains in the state of *wuḍūʾ* until one of the factors that breaks the *wuḍūʾ* occurs. There are seven things that invalidate *wuḍūʾ*. This means that if any one of these things occurs, one's *wuḍūʾ* is no longer valid, thus a person will have to repeat their *wuḍūʾ* before doing anything else that requires *wuḍūʾ*.

Some of these invalidators are:

- Urinating or defecating
- Passing gas from the backside
- Sleeping—meaning that simultaneously one's eyes do not see and one's ears do not hear; however, if one's eyes do not see, but one can still hear, then the *wuḍūʾ* will not be invalidated
- Things that cause a person to lose one's mind, such as insanity, intoxication, and unconsciousness

Activity 2.2a: Valid or Invalid?

For each of the following scenarios, place a tick mark under the column "Correct" or "Incorrect" based on whether it meets the conditions for one's *wuḍūʾ* to be correct or incorrect.

SCENARIO	CORRECT	INCORRECT
You find a water faucet located on private property. You do not know who the owner is, nor are you able to locate them at this time. You perform your *wuḍūʾ* for *ṣalāh* with this water.		
There is a fresh scrape on your knee that is still lightly bleeding even though you have already washed it once. You perform your *wuḍūʾ* for *ṣalāh* without washing the blood off again.		
You begin your *wuḍūʾ* by washing your arms.		
There is a bucket of water with a mop inside of it that has made the water noticeably dirty. You perform your *wuḍūʾ* for *ṣalāh* using the water inside of the bucket.		
Your wrist is very sore so your sibling helps you open the tap. You perform your *wuḍūʾ* for *ṣalāh* by yourself.		
You are at school and begin to perform *wuḍūʾ,* but the sound of the school smoke alarm draws you away before you can finish. You follow emergency procedures, and by the time you are cleared to return to the building, an hour has passed. You pick up where you left off and finish your *wuḍūʾ*.		
You begin your *wuḍūʾ* with the intention of gaining proximity to Allah ﷻ.		
You are using super glue and some of it falls on your hands and nails, and it hardens before you can wipe it off. Without removing it properly, you perform your *wuḍūʾ* for *ṣalāh*.		
You start to perform your *wuḍūʾ,* but before you are done, you need to use the washroom urgently. After you are done, you continue your *wuḍūʾ* from where you left off before going to the toilet.		
You did *wuḍūʾ* before leaving for a field trip, but you fall asleep on the bus.		

DOUBTS

There are several types of doubts that a person can have about *wuḍūʾ*, and different ways to resolve them. Here are some guidelines to remember in regards to these:

If a person **FREQUENTLY HAS DOUBTS** about one's wuḍūʾ or some aspects of wuḍūʾ

Frequent doubts can include:

- *Same doubt on a regular basis*
- *Frequently doubts about various parts of wuḍūʾ*

MUST IGNORE the doubt

If a person doubts whether or not they performed wuḍūʾ

BEFORE ṣalāh

Perform wuḍūʾ before starting ṣalāh

DURING ṣalāh

Stop the ṣalāh, go and perform wuḍūʾ, and then re-start ṣalāh from the beginning

AFTER ṣalāh

Ṣalāh which is done is valid and does not need to be repeated. However, perform wuḍūʾ for any subsequent ṣalāh

If at any point during the ṣalāh, a person becomes **CERTAIN**

They are not in the state of wuḍūʾ

Must go back and perform wuḍūʾ, and re-pray any ṣalāh that was performed without being in wuḍūʾ

They performed wuḍūʾ, but then doubts whether one's wuḍūʾ has become void or not

Assume wuḍūʾ is still valid

Example: *if one is unsure whether or not they used the bathroom after performing wuḍūʾ, they should ignore this doubt and assume that their wuḍūʾ is still valid*

If a person doubts whether they performed or completed a particular component

DURING wuḍūʾ

Must go back and complete that component

AFTER wuḍūʾ

IGNORE the doubt

Example: *if a person is still performing wuḍūʾ and is not sure whether they washed their entire right arm or not, they should go back and wash it, then continue from there. But if a person has completed the entire wuḍūʾ then has this doubt, one should ignore it*

Activity 2.2b: Scenario-Based Discussion

1. Ahmad is washing his right arm during *wuḍūʾ*. He then doubts whether he finished washing his face or not. He rarely, if ever, has any doubt regarding his *wuḍūʾ*. Should he go back and wash his face?

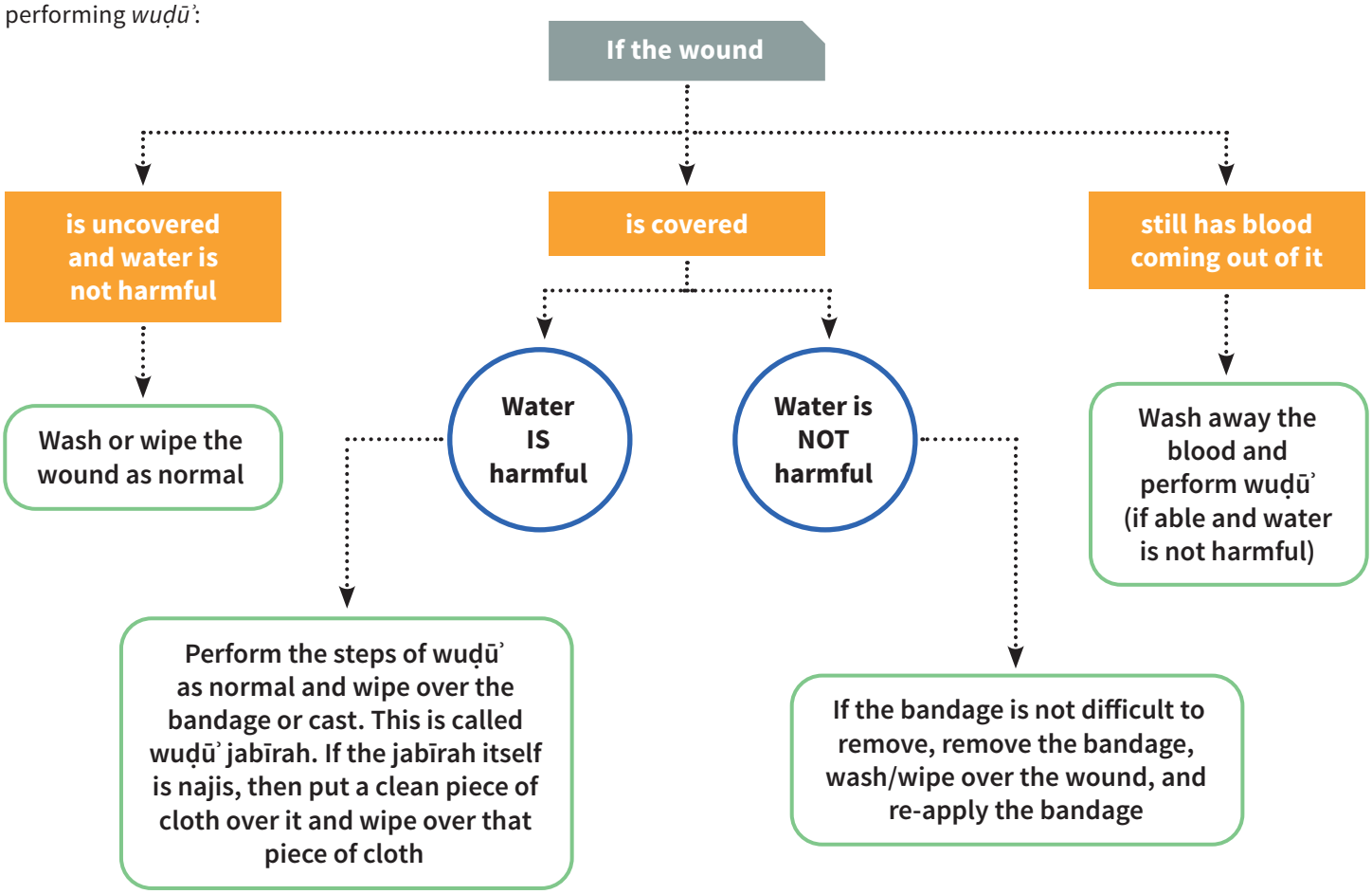
2. Sarah performed *wuḍūʾ* this morning. Now it is time for the midday prayer. She is not sure if her *wuḍūʾ* has become void or not. Does she need to perform (another) *wuḍūʾ* before praying?

3. Abbas just finished his *Maghrib* prayer. He now doubts if he performed *wuḍūʾ* before praying or not. Does he need to repeat his *Maghrib* prayer? Should he perform *wuḍūʾ* before praying *ʿIshāʾ*?

4. Zahra often doubts about her *wuḍūʾ*. This happens on a daily basis. Today she starts to doubt if she is washing her face completely. She feels she needs to repeat her *wuḍūʾ* multiple times to get it right. What should she do? What is her Islamic obligation in this situation?

WUḌŪʾ JABĪRAH [3]

If a person has a wound, an ulcer, or a boil on one of the parts involved in *wuḍūʾ*, they need to apply the following rules when performing *wuḍūʾ*:


If the wound
is uncovered and water is not harmful
is covered
still has blood coming out of it
Wash or wipe the wound as normal
Water IS harmful
Water is NOT harmful
Wash away the blood and perform wuḍūʾ (if able and water is not harmful)
Perform the steps of wuḍūʾ as normal and wipe over the bandage or cast. This is called wuḍūʾ jabīrah. If the jabīrah itself is najis, then put a clean piece of cloth over it and wipe over that piece of cloth
If the bandage is not difficult to remove, remove the bandage, wash/wipe over the wound, and re-apply the bandage

Activity 2.2c: Wuḍūʾ Jabīrah

The class will be split into three groups. Each group will be given one of the three following scenarios to act out:

GROUP 1

You have a cut on your right forearm (under the elbow) which the nurse has bandaged. She specifically told you to keep it dry to help it heal quicker. It is time for *ṣalāh* and you need to perform *wuḍūʾ*. Practically show what you would do in such a situation.

GROUP 2

You broke a bone in your left arm after falling off your bike. You have a plaster-cast over most of your arm from the elbow to the hand. It is time for *ṣalāh*. Practically show what you would do in this situation (your teacher will provide a prop to act as a cast).

GROUP 3

You had a large cyst removed from the front part of your scalp, and you now have a bandage wrapped around your head. It covers all the area of your forehead and a portion of the top of your head (your scalp). It is time for *ṣalāh*. Practically show what you would do in this situation.

3 *Jabīrah* refers to the thing with which a wound or a break in a bone is bandaged; or some part of the body upon which medication is applied for a wound and suchlike.

GHUSL

There are two types of ablutions (washing rituals) in Islam: *wuḍūʾ* and *ghusl*. We already talked about *wuḍūʾ*, which is a partial washing/wiping of the body. The other type of ablution is called *ghusl*.

Ghusl in Arabic literally means 'the purity that one attains after washing and removing dirt from something.' The fiqh definition of *ghusl* is 'washing the entire body in a certain manner with the intention of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ.' Through *ghusl*, a person attains spiritual purity. Thus, *ghusl* is an important part of worship *(ʿibādah)*.

A person attains spiritual purity through ghusl

We will look at the specific types, and methods for performing *ghusl*.

HOW DO WE PERFORM GHUSL?

Ghusl can be performed in two ways: **irtimāsī** and **tartībī**. *Irtimāsī* is when you submerge your entire body underwater, and this must be done all at once, thus it is less common. We usually do *ghusl tartībī* which is sequential, meaning that certain body areas must be washed before the next ones.

The steps for ghusl irtimāsī are the following:

- Have a correct intention *(niyyah)*.
- Submerge your body all at once under water (for example, by diving or jumping in). Or, if you are already in the water, then have one part of the body come out of the water, make the intention, then go back underwater all together.

Additional points:

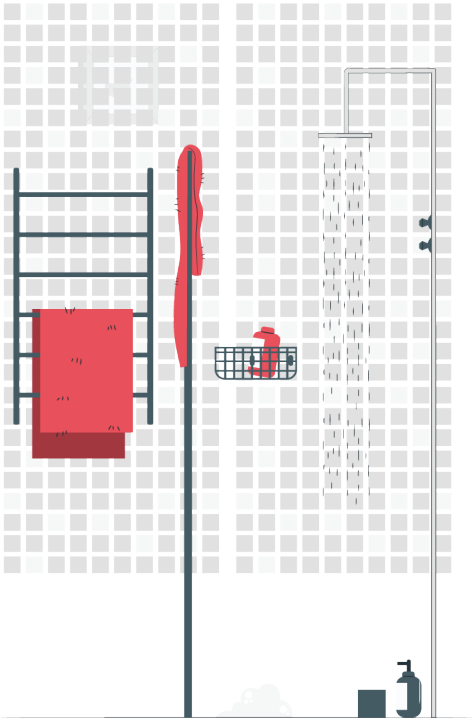
- If there is something *najis* on the body, then you must remove it before beginning your *ghusl*.
- If you are performing this form of *ghusl* while wearing your clothes (for example, in a pool), then make sure to move your clothes around while under the water to allow the water to reach all parts of the body.

The steps for ghusl tartībi are the following:

REMOVE BARRIERS & IMPURITIES	Make sure that the body has been washed from any barrier that would block the water. *Examples of barriers include nail polish (even the breathable ones), paint, or band-aids. A barrier in this case would be anything that prevents water from reaching that area. Henna or ink that has been absorbed into the skin are not considered as barriers because they do cover over the skin as such.*
MAKE INTENTION	Make the intention of performing ghusl for the sake of closeness to Allah ﷻ, and in obedience to His commands. *The intention does not have to be said out loud, as long as you know what you are doing and why you are doing it.*
STEP OUT OF WATER	If you are already in the shower, then you need to step away the flow of water, then step back in to start your *ghusl*. When moving on to the next part of the *ghusl*, it is again important to move away from the water, then back into it for the next part. This particular rule is that of Āyatullāh Sīstānī's, who says that it is an obligatory precaution to follow this ruling. You can refer to the ruling of another *marjaʿ* who does not require this movement in and out of the flow of water.
WASH HEAD AND NECK	Wash the head and neck, making sure that the water reaches every part. • *Some marājiʿ say that it is better to run your hands over all of the parts of your body. There is no need to go inside of the ears and nose when washing your head.* • *If you stand under the shower head, there is no problem if the rest of your body gets wet with your neck.* • *Short hair that is considered part of the body must be washed.* • *As for long hair:* ▷ *According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, it is not obligatory to wash long hair.* ▷ *According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, as per obligatory precaution, long hair must be washed.*
WASH BODY	Washing the entire body. Do we need to wash the right side first? • *According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, after washing the head, one can simply wash the entire body. There is no need to wash the right side and then the left side. However, it is better to wash the right side first.* • *According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, as per obligatory precaution, the right side must first be washed, and then the left side.* • *When washing the body, we should make sure that the water reaches every part (a person can be under the shower and water can be reaching all of the parts of one's body, but their intention should be for the right side, then the left side—if following a marjaʿ who says this order is necessary).*

Some Tips for Ghusl Tartībī:

- If a person has long nails, then they need to make sure that the dirt that is underneath the excess part is removed in order to do the *ghusl* properly.
- If there is something *najis* on one's body, then as a person washes the body, one can wash off the *najis* thing, and then wash the skin underneath as part of the *ghusl*.
- When washing each section of the body, it is better if a person washes extra to make sure one has completely washed the necessary part (e.g. as you are washing the right side, wash a little bit of your left side as well).
- It is better to wash the central areas (such as the belly button and private parts) with each side.
- Unlike *wuḍūʾ*, when washing a particular part, a person does **not** need to wash from top to bottom, or use one's hands to wash over that part.
- Unlike *wuḍūʾ*, continuity is **not** a condition. So if a person washes their head and neck as part of the *ghusl*, then decides to shampoo one's hair, and then wash the right side, this is acceptable. It also means that if someone misses a part of the left side and realizes later, they can wash that part again after the *ghusl* without restarting the entire process since it is the last part of the *ghusl*. According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, even if one misses a part of the right side and realizes later, they can wash that part after the *ghusl* is done without having to restart all over again.
- If a person realizes after *ghusl* that they missed a part of the *ghusl*, they have to restart from that point. For example, if one comes out of the shower and realizes that they missed washing their right hand, then:
  - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Khamenei: one can wash only their right hand, then the entire left side again.
  - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī: one only needs to wash their right hand without having to wash the left side of the body afterwards again.



WHEN DO WE PERFORM GHUSL?

We will discuss the specific situations for when *ghusl* becomes obligatory in other lessons. There are also situations where *ghusl* is recommended *(mustaḥab)*. The most common of these are:

- Friday *Ghusl*: The best time to perform this *ghusl* is between the *adhān* of *Fajr* and *Ẓuhr* time on Friday. One of the benefits of this is that it washes away many sins.
- *Ghusl* on special days or nights of the year, such as *Laylatul Qadr*, *Eidul Fiṭr*, and *Eidul Aḍḥā*.

TAYAMMUM

When does a Person have to Perform Tayammum?

There are certain instances where instead of *wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl*, a person will have to purify oneself with clean earth or soil, and this is called *tayammum*. Some of these situations include the following:

- Water is not available at all, even though a person has made a reasonable effort to find it.
- There is not enough water for *wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl*.
- Using water is harmful for us.
- It is very difficult or dangerous to find water.
  - ▷ Difficulty does not mean inconvenient, if it is possible to find water somehow or another, then this means that water is available and one cannot perform *tayammum* in this case.
- Water is available, but is not permissible to use:
  - ▷ For example, if a water fountain has a sign that says: "For drinking ONLY," then one cannot use that for anything other than drinking. For public water, such as in public washrooms or sinks, the permission is implied because the washroom is for everyone to use in general. Similarly, if one goes to a family or friend's house, and they are okay if their water is used for *wuḍūʾ*.
- There is little time for prayer, and *tayammum* would take less time than *wuḍūʾ*.
  - ▷ For example, if a person wakes up late for *Fajr* because they overslept, and there is only a very small amount of time left before it is *qaḍāʾ*, and if one performs *wuḍūʾ* they will miss the time for *ṣalāh*, in this case one must perform *tayammum* instead.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Have you ever had to perform *tayammum* instead of *wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl*? If yes, what were the circumstances? If not, can you think of a situation not mentioned above that would require you to perform *tayammum*?

HOW TO PERFORM TAYAMMUM

NIYYAH: Make the intention to perform *tayammum* for the sake of attaining nearness to Allah ﷻ.

Remove barriers: Like in *wuḍūʾ*, any barriers on the forehead and hands, such as rings, band aids, etc. should be removed.

STEP 1

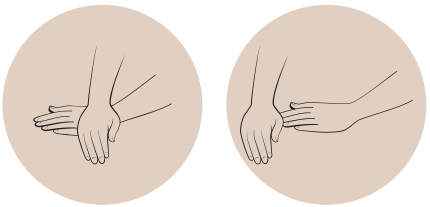
Strike the palms of the hands simultaneously on earth, sand, or stone (in order of preference) that is dry and clean. When possible, some amount of earth/sand/dust should stick on your hands after striking.

STEP 2

Pull both palms together from the top of the forehead where the hair grows down to the bridge of the nose. Both sides of the forehead joining the ears and over the eyebrows should be included. Try to cover the entire forehead.

STEP 3

Wipe the palm of the left hand over the back of the right hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips, and then wipe the palm of the right hand over the back of the left hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips.

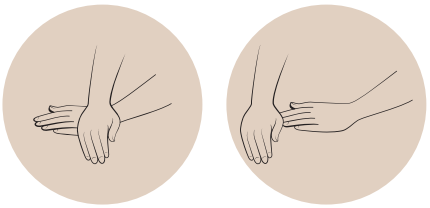


STEP 4

Repeat Step 1.

STEP 5

Repeat Step 3.



NOTE: *these last two steps are a recommended precaution as per Āyatullāh Sīstānī; and obligatory precaution as per Āyatullāh Khamenei.*

RULES OF TAYAMMUM

Tayammum can be done on one of the following things (in order of preference):

1. Earth
2. Sand
3. Pebbles or stone

Whatever of the above is used for *tayammum* must be:

- Dry
- Pure *(Ṭāhir)*
- As per Āyatullāh Sīstānī, it is obligatory precaution that the item used should leave some particles (earth, or sand, etc.) on our hands (one should not shake this off completely after striking the hands). As per Āyatullāh Khamenei, it is recommended to leave some particles (of earth, or sand, etc.) on our hands.

Practical Demonstration of Tayammum

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oh0gxMmyPSk

Activity 2.2d: Performing Tayammum

Your teacher will provide a box which has some dry, pure soil in it. Demonstrate how to perform tayammum.

CHAPTER 3

Ṣalāh

3.1 Preliminaries to Prayer

3.2 Further Rules of Ṣalāh

3.3 Ṣalāh: Khushūʿ

3.1 Preliminaries to Prayer

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Detail the steps necessary to take before performing *ṣalāh*.
- Discuss the importance of praying each prayer during the *faḍīlah* or 'prime time,' and even better than that is at the very beginning when the time sets in for the prayer, known in Arabic as *awwal-waqt*.
- Review the prayer timings, and detail the specific requirements for determining the actual time of the different *ṣalāh* and their *faḍīlah* times for reciting them.
- Review places of prayer and other related rules.

PRELIMINARIES TO PRAYER

Ṣalāh, or the daily prayer, is the one of most important obligations that Allah ﷻ has set for us. It is our source of spiritual nourishment, and a means of gaining closeness to Allah ﷻ. There are a number of preliminary conditions that we need to ensure are present before we offer our *ṣalāh*. These include:

- **Ṭahārah:** We must be ritually pure *(ṭāhir)*, and in a state of *wuḍūʾ* in order to pray. We have discussed the details of this in previous lessons.
- Face the direction of **qiblah**.
- **Time of prayer:** prayer must be offered at the correct time.
- **Place of prayer:** prayer must be offered in an appropriate place.
- **Clothing for prayer:** the clothing we wear while offering prayer must meet certain conditions.

In this lesson, we will discuss some of the above conditions in more detail.

FACING THE QIBLAH

Activity 3.1a: Scenarios

1. You are on a camping trip with a group of friends. On the first day, you have adequate phone/internet connection. What options do you have for finding out the direction of *qiblah*?

2. On the second day, you traveled further into the national park and no longer have a phone/internet connection. What options do you now have for finding out the direction of *qiblah*?

3. It is night-time and you have no phone or internet connection and no map. You have no idea about which direction is North, and no way of finding the *qiblah* direction. What do you do in this situation?

THE TIME OF PRAYER

There is quite a long period of time in which each prayer can be recited. However, it is always best to recite each prayer at the beginning of its prescribed time *(awwal waqt)*. The time after that when it is still better to recite it is known as *faḍīlah* or 'prime time.' This creates the spirit of punctuality and discipline within us, and also reflects our dedication and desire to communicate with Allah ﷻ.

Offering our prayer at the earliest time within the time of *faḍīlah* is a highly recommended act.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said:

"Whoever performs the obligatory prayers at the beginning of their times and observes their restrictions, the angels will raise them (those prayers as a) white and pure (form) into heaven. The prayer will say (to the performer): 'May Allah preserve you as you preserved me, and entrust you to a generous angel as you looked after me.' But whoever performs them after the appointed times with no excuse, and does not observe their restrictions, the angels will raise them black and dark. The prayer will shout (at the performer): 'You have lost me (disregarded me), may Allah ﷻ lose you (disregard you), and may He not care for you as you did not care for me.'"[1]

1 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il,* Vol. 3, P. 95.

PRAYER TIMINGS ACCORDING TO THE QUR'ĀN

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَىٰ غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ
إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ۝

"Establish the prayer at the time of the declining sun to the darkness of the night, and the morning recitation; for indeed the morning recitation is witnessed."[2]

It is clear from this verse that the times of the obligatory prayers are three:

1. The time of the two obligatory prayers, *Ẓuhr* (noon) and *ʿAsr* (afternoon), which is shared between the two—this is referred to in the verse as 'the declining of the sun.'
2. The time of the two obligatory prayers *Maghrib* (after sunset) and *ʿIshāʾ* (night) which is also shared between the two—this is referred to in the verse as 'the darkness of the night.'
3. The time for the *Fajr* (morning) prayer which is specific to it—this is referred to as 'the morning recitation.'

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 78.

Activity 3.1b: Review Questions

1. According to the Qurʾān, there are:
   - **a.** Three prayer times.
   - **b.** Five prayer times.
   - **c.** Three prayer times only when it is raining.

2. The best time to pray one's *ṣalāh* is during the prime time for each prayer which is about within an hour after the *adhān*. This is called:
   - **a.** The *mustaḥab* time.
   - **b.** The *faḍīlah* time.
   - **c.** The *wājib* time.

3. According to the narrations:
   - **a.** A prayer is best accepted when it is recited right on time.
   - **b.** A prayer is accepted the same no matter when it is recited.
   - **c.** Neither of the above.

NATURAL SIGNS TO DETERMINE THE TIMES FOR THE PRAYERS

FAJR PRAYER	Just before dawn, a vertical column of whiteness rises upwards from the East, this is called the false dawn. This is not the time for *Fajr*. When this whiteness spreads and becomes a horizontal line, it is called the true dawn *(al-Fajr aṣ-Ṣādiq)*; and this is the beginning of the time for the *Fajr* prayers. This time continues until sunrise (which is on average about 1.5 hours). The prime time *(faḍīlah)* for *Fajr* prayers is from true dawn until just before the sky becomes bright (roughly 20 minutes before sunrise).
ẒUHR PRAYER	The time for *Ẓuhr* prayers begins when the sun starts declining at midday (directly overhead) and continues until sunset. When we see the sun start to decline towards the West, then we know that the time for *Ẓuhr* has set in. The prime time *(faḍīlah)* for praying *Ẓuhr* is on average about 90 minutes after the *adhān* time.
ʿASR PRAYER	The time for *ʿAsr* prayers is the same as that for *Ẓuhr* prayers. The only condition is that the *Ẓuhr* prayer should be recited first. The prime time *(faḍīlah)* for *ʿAsr* prayers is on average within three hours after the *Ẓuhr adhān* time.
MAGHRIB PRAYER	The obligatory precaution is that the time for *Maghrib* prayers is when the sun has set, and the redness which appears after this disappears from the eastern half of the sky. In other words, sunset (the disappearance of the disc of the sun) is not the time for *Maghrib* prayers. Rather, we must wait for more than half of the sky to go dark (usually 10-20 minutes after the disk of the sun has set). The prime time for *Maghrib* prayers is from this time until the entire sky is dark. This is usually about 45 minutes to one hour after sunset.
ʿISHĀʾ PRAYER	The time for *ʿIshāʾ* prayers is the same as that of *Maghrib*. The only condition is that *Maghrib* prayer should be recited first. The time continues until Islamic midnight. This is calculated as the halfway point between sunset and true dawn. The prime time for *ʿIshāʾ* prayers is from when the redness has gone from the whole sky until one third of the night. It is important to note that for girls or women in the state of *ḥayḍ*, the time for *Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʾ* extends until *Fajr*. Another important point to remember is that if a person sleeps, forgets, or has another valid excuse for not being able to recite *Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʾ* prayer before midnight, then the time for these prayers extends to the time of *Fajr*.

Activity 3.1c: Illustrations

If we are in a situation where we do not have access to a calendar which indicates the prayer times, then we need to know the natural signs that we can use to tell the timings of the different prayers. Draw a picture that illustrates each of the five prayer times as described above.

FAJR PRAYER

ẒUHR PRAYER

ʿASR PRAYER

MAGHRIB PRAYER

ʿISHĀʾ PRAYER

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

There are also some rules that we need to observe when it comes to the place where we want to pray.

1. Place of prayer should not be usurped

One of the main conditions of the place of prayer is that it should not be usurped. This means that a person must have permission to pray in a particular place. It is important to remember that although we usually discuss this condition when it comes to prayer, this rule applies to any type of usage of a place, or even when it comes to using water, belongings of other people, etc. Therefore, living in, sleeping in, or walking through a place that one does not have permission to use is forbidden in Islam and considered a sin.

If a place belongs to someone else, then we need to have their permission before we are allowed to pray in that place. When it comes to vast expanses of land such as large farms, deserts, or gardens which are not bound by fences, one can pray in such places without the permission of the owner, unless they know that the owner has explicitly made it clear that they are not happy with anyone praying there.

2. Place of prayer must be *Ṭāhir* (pure)

The place where a person is praying must not be impure *(najis)* in such a way that the impurity would reach the person's body or clothes. Therefore, if a place is impure but dry, such that the impurity will not reach or transfer onto the person's body or clothes, then it is permissible to pray there. If a place is impure and wet, one can place a prayer mat or something else over it to stop the impurity from being transferred to the body or clothes of the person, and then pray there. The only exception to this rule is that the place of prostration (where one performs sajdah) must be pure—whether it is dry or wet.

3. Men and women praying in the same area

If a man and a woman are praying close to one another (in the same area), then:

a) According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, the woman should pray behind the man. However, if there is a barrier between them, then it is okay for them to pray side by side or for the woman to pray in front of the man. If there is no barrier, then if they are more than 4.5 meters (5 yards) apart, then the man does not have to be in the front.

b) According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, the two should be more than a handspan apart, and the man does not have to be in front.

Both of these rulings of these *marājiʿ* are according to obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*.

OTHER RULES

The place of prayer must be steady, and not moving at all (for example, a person cannot pray on a rocking boat).

We cannot pray on very steep hills or steps because the place we put our forehead for *sujūd* should be roughly level with where we are standing—up to four fingers closed in terms of height discrepancy is permissible, but not more than that.

Activity 3.1d: Scenario-Based Discussion

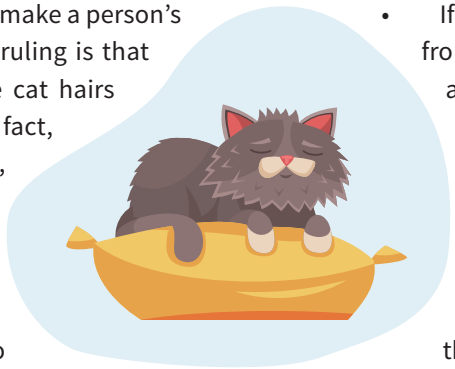
SCENARIO 1 **(regarding permission)**	Kumayl is on a road trip with his family. It is time for prayer and they are on the road. On either side of the road there are fenced-off farm properties. Behind the fence, there are nice, flat, grassy areas on which one can pray. Can Kumayl pray on one of these farms; or does he need to get permission from the owner first?
SCENARIO 2 **(regarding *najāsah*)**	Nizar and his friend go on a fishing trip to the beach. As the time for the *Maghrib* prayer approaches, it starts raining very heavily and they cannot find a dry patch to pray on. Nizar insists that they cannot pray there because the surface is very wet. His friend however, insists that they can pray as long as there is no impurity *(najāsah)* on the surface. Who is correct? In the event that there is *najāsah* on the surface, they throw a clean rug over it and begin their prayers. Are their prayers valid?
SCENARIO 3 **(regarding an uneven surface)**	After having no luck with catching fish at the beach, Hasnain and his friend decide to take the boat the following week. Without having to worry about any impure surfaces this time, they are faced with another challenge—the rough sea is making their boat very unstable to the point that they cannot even stand straight. Can Hasnain and his friend say their prayers in this situation, or do they need to keep on moving until they reach calmer waters before they begin to pray?
SCENARIO 4 **(regarding prostration)**	Ali is part of his local school soccer team and is playing a 6-a side indoor game on synthetic turf. Ali usually carries his *turbah* with him, but he forgot to bring it with him this time. It is time for *ṣalāh* and he is looking for something to pray on. Ali has the following options, but needs your help to choose what to pray on: **A.** Pray on the turf as it is just like grass **B.** Pray on the wooden basketball court which is “treated” wood **C.** Fetch an inedible leaf from a nearby tree, and prostrate on that leaf
SCENARIO 5 **(regarding the positioning of a man and woman)**	Ammar is getting ready to say his prayers in his room, but when he enters, he sees that his sister is praying there. He finds some space behind her and starts performing his prayer. Is Ammar’s prayer valid?

RULES OF CLOTHING FOR PRAYER

When it comes to the clothes that we wear during our prayers, there are certain rules which we need to observe. Some of these include:

ṬAHĀRAH

- The clothes worn in prayer, or even a part of them, should not be made with the leather/skin of a predatory animal, or an animal which has not been slaughtered according to Islamic law.
  - ▹ According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, if a person **doubts** whether some clothing was made from an animal whose meat is lawful or unlawful to eat, then irrespective of whether it was made in an Islamic country or not, it is permitted to perform prayers with it.
  - ▹ A person's clothing should not have any hair, sweat, etc., of an animal whose meat is forbidden *(ḥarām)* to eat.
  - ▹ Although cat hair is *ṭāhir*, praying with clothing that has cat hair on it is impermissible. However, our *marājiʿ* disagree on how many cat hairs invalidate one's *ṣalāh*. The majority of our *marājiʿ*, including Āyatullāh Khamenei, hold that even one cat hair will make a person's *ṣalāh* void. Āyatullāh Sīstānī's ruling is that one, two, or even up to three cat hairs do not void one's *ṣalāh*. In fact, according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, it is permissible to have even more than several hairs on a small item of clothing, such as one's socks. All of the *marājiʿ* say that this ruling applies to someone who knows about the presence of hair on one's clothing—their responsibility is to remove the hair before praying. However, if someone is not aware of it and finds out later, then they do not have to pray again.



PERMISSIBILITY

- The clothes we wear during prayer must be permissible for us to use. This means that either we own them, or we have permission to use them (if they are not our own).

- We may sometimes come across blood on our clothes, thus need to be careful about this when it comes to our prayers. If the blood (on our clothes) is from our own body, and the wound or sore has not yet healed, then we can pray with that. If it is possible to clean the wound and stop it from bleeding, then we should do this before we pray.
- If the blood is from an external source (not our own body) that is *ʿayn an-najāsah* (like a dog), then it will invalidate our prayer if it is on our body or clothing.
- If the blood is from a wound on our body that has healed, or from an external source that is not *ʿayn an-najāsah*, and it has not been mixed with another substance or diluted, then it is permissible to pray in that clothing, as long as the blood covers an area that is less than the size of the top part of the thumb (from the tip of the thumb to the first crease).
- If the saliva, nasal mucus, or any other moisture from an animal whose meat is unlawful to eat, such as a cat, is on the body or clothing of a person who wants to pray, and if it is still wet, then this will make one's prayer invalid. However, if it has dried up and the actual substance has been removed, then one's prayer will be valid. This means that if we have a cat at home, we should be careful that there is no cat saliva or other substance of theirs on our clothing or body when we are praying.

COVERING

- Both men and women have to cover a certain amount of their body when they are reciting their prayers. For women, this means covering the entire body except the face and hands up to the wrist. Their feet may be uncovered as long as no non-*maḥrams* are present. (Not only should the necessary parts be covered, but the clothing must not be see-through such that the skin is visible.) For men, this means covering the private parts, and it is better to cover as much of the body as possible (at least to the knees).

Activity 3.1e: Scenario-Based Discussion

SCENARIO 1

Miqdad was playing cricket and injured his finger. During his *Ẓuhr* prayer (after the match), he realized that his nail was bleeding and had soaked his shirt. The wound was still fresh. Is Miqdad able to continue saying his prayers? What should he do with his soiled shirt? Discuss.

SCENARIO 2

After the cricket game, Miqdad shook hands (without realizing that he was bleeding) with his friend Ali, and Ali's shirt became stained with blood over an area which was about the size of Ali's palm. Is Ali able to offer his prayers with this blood on his clothes?

3.2 Further Rules of Ṣalāh

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Recognize the obligation toward, and the value of praying in public.
- Identify the general rules for *Ṣalātul Jamāʿah* (Congregational Prayers).
- Establish the proper manners for joining *Ṣalātul Jamāʿah* late.
- Identify and examine the invalidators of prayer.

PRAYER TUTORIAL

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24ryA9npmyo

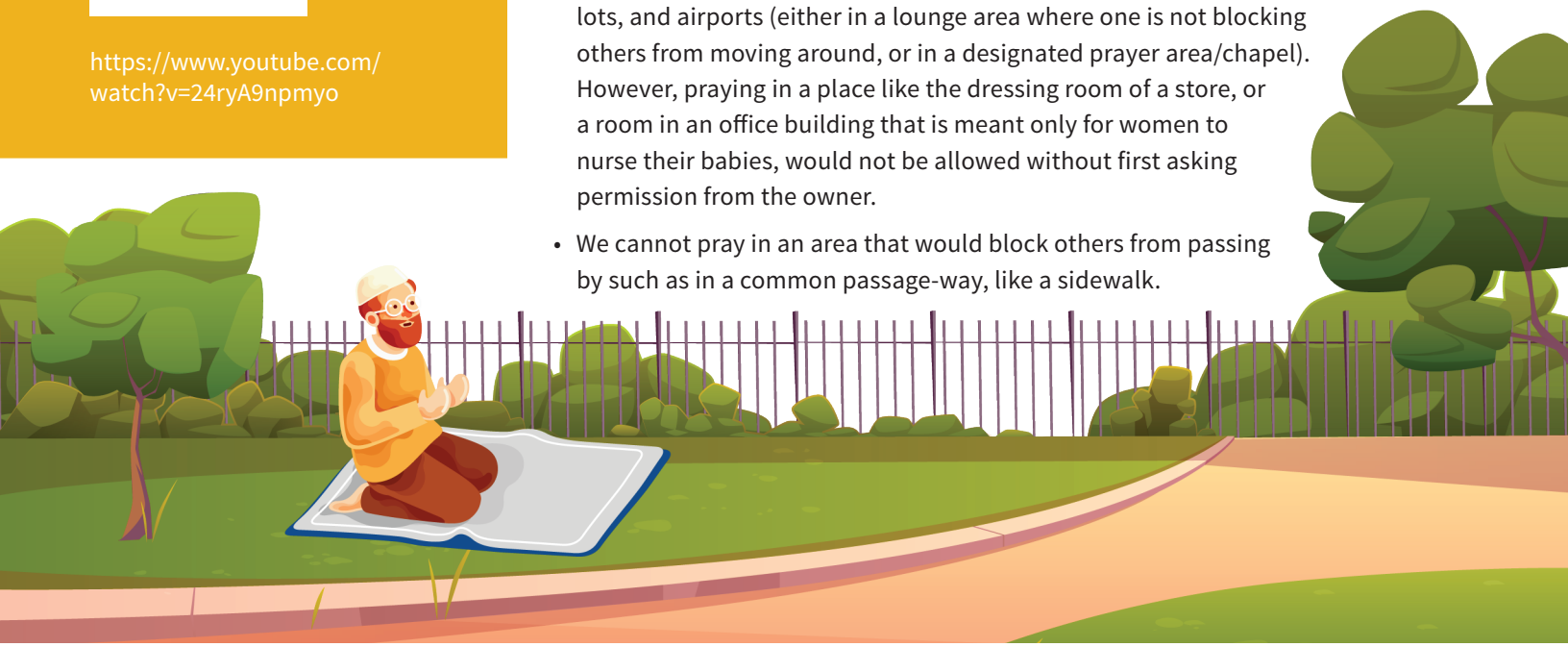
In previous years, we learned how to perform the obligatory daily prayers. You can review these guidelines by watching the link to the video provided! Today, we will dive deeper into some of the rulings for *ṣalāh*, including guidelines for praying in public, some rules of Congregational Prayers, and some of the invalidators of prayer.

PRAYING IN PUBLIC

The obligation of offering *ṣalāh* is always there, even if a person is somewhere outside in the public. We must always fulfill our obligations to Allah ﷻ with dignity and pride. There are other religions that also practice public prayers and related obligations, and we should be proud to represent our religion wherever we are when the opportunity arises, and not shy away from it. Who knows, maybe our praying in public will intrigue others and encourage them to learn more about Islam! Of course, we should also make sure that the situation and conditions are suitable for praying. In some circumstances, if your *ṣalāh* is not getting *qaḍāʾ*, you may prefer to wait until you get home to pray, as long as there will be enough time to recite the prayers.

When performing our prayers in public spaces, we need to be aware of certain guidelines to ensure that our prayers are correct:

- When praying in an indoor public space, we need to be sure that it is meant for general use, or at least obtain explicit or implicit permission to pray there.
- Praying outdoors in a public area, such as a park, is allowed. According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, it is permissible to pray on any land that is not enclosed by walls (like a parking lot), as long as we do not know of any objection to praying there.
- Typical examples where someone can pray in public include parks, parking lots, and airports (either in a lounge area where one is not blocking others from moving around, or in a designated prayer area/chapel). However, praying in a place like the dressing room of a store, or a room in an office building that is meant only for women to nurse their babies, would not be allowed without first asking permission from the owner.
- We cannot pray in an area that would block others from passing by such as in a common passage-way, like a sidewalk.



Activity 3.2a: Reflection

1. Have you ever been inspired to do good by the actions of another person? Have you ever felt empowered to stand up for another classmate, or for justice in general, because someone set the right example for you? Share a time when you were compelled to perform a righteous action because of the good example that someone else set for you. Discuss how their leadership and/or dignity was inspiring to you.

2. Now, consider how praying in public—if the right conditions allow—might inspire another person.

ṢALĀTUL JAMĀʿAH (CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS)

There are very few practical acts of worship emphasized in Islam as much as *Ṣalātul Jamāʿah* (the Congregational Prayers).

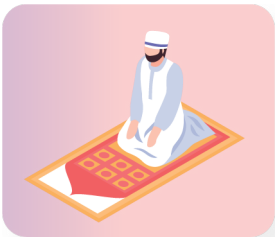
The Noble Prophet ﷺ said: "One prayer of a person in congregation is more worthy than their 40 years of prayers at home (alone)." [1]

During the time of the Prophet ﷺ, it was common amongst the Muslims to perform most, if not all, of their prayers in congregation at the masjid.[2] We too, should do our best to pray together in congregation in a masjid as much as possible. If we cannot get to a masjid, then we should pray in congregation at home with our families. This increases the reward of our *ṣalāh* exponentially.

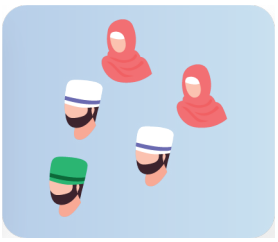
1 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol.5, P. 374.
2 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol.5, P. 374.

GENERAL RULES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

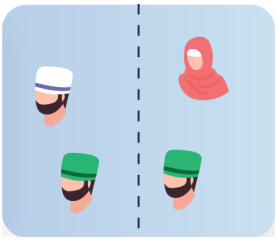
When praying in congregation, one must keep the following rules in mind:



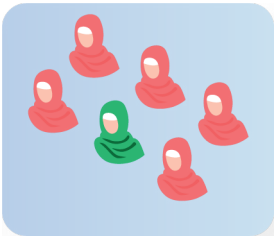
- The prayer must be led by an *imām al-jamāʿah*, or a prayer leader. This leader must be a sane adult who is just, knows the rules of prayer, and can recite Arabic correctly in the prayers.



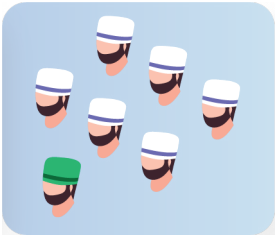
- If there are any male followers, then the leader must be male. If the followers are all female, then the leader can be a female (or a male).



- If there is only one follower, and the follower is a male, then it is best for the follower to stand to the right and slightly behind the one who leads the prayer. If the follower is a female and the *imām* is a male, then it is best for her to stand to the right and further back such that her place of *sujūd* is in line with the standing place (the feet) of the imām.



- If there are two or more male followers, then they must all stand behind the imām without a barrier (e.g., a wall) separating them from the imām.

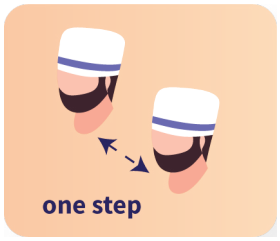


- If the imām and all of the followers are women, then they should stand in one line (side by side), and the woman imām should not stand in front of the others. (If there is more than one row of followers then once the first line is full, the next group of women can stand in the second row.)

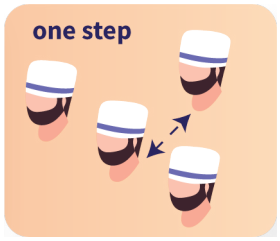
- When the imām stands in front, the gap between the imām and the rest of the congregation should be no more than one step[3] of a person, as measured from the place of *sujūd* of the follower to the standing place of the imām.

3 The step can be the largest possible step that a normal size person can take, which is approximately 1 meter, or 3 feet and 3 inches.

- Similarly, the gap separating the worshipers standing side by side should be no more than one step of a person.

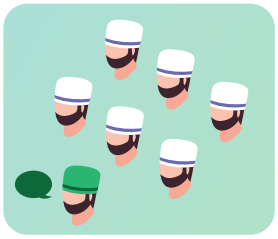


- When a worshiper is connected to the congregation with someone in front of them, the gap between where they stand and the person in front should not be more than one step.



- The actions of those in the congregation must not precede those of the imām. The parts of the prayer should be done in unison with, or slightly after the actions of the imām.

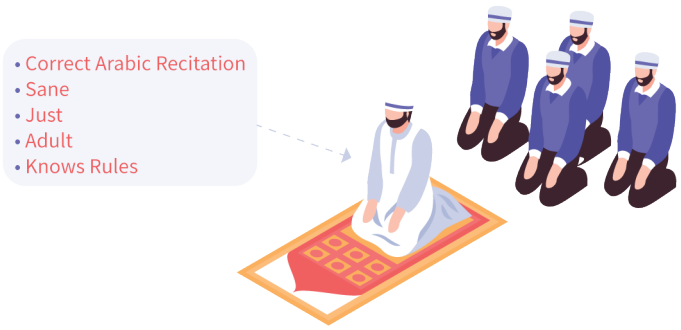
- When the imām is reciting the two *sūrahs* of the Qurʾān (Sūrah al-Ḥamd and the second *sūrah*), the followers should just listen to the imām's recitation as the imām recites them out loud in the *Maghrib*, *ʿIshāʾ*, and *Fajr* prayers. However, in those prayers, where a person cannot hear the *sūrahs* being recited, it is recommended (*mustaḥab*) to whisper the *sūrahs* oneself. For the *Ẓuhr* and *ʿAsr* prayers, when the imām is reciting the *sūrahs* in a whisper, the follower may remain silent. Alternately, it is *mustaḥab* to recite the *dhikr* of Allah ﷻ during this time (for example, by saying *lā ilāha illallāh*, *alḥamdulillāh*, *subḥānallāh*, or *ṣalawāt*). For all of the other parts of the prayer, one must recite the words at least loud enough so that they could hear themselves if the room were quiet (this is referred to as an audible whisper). It is reprehensible (*makrūh*) for the follower to recite any part of the prayer in such a voice that the imām would be able to hear them.



- It is best for the lines of the congregation to be aligned straight, not from the place of prostration, but rather from the position of their feet. Furthermore, it is better to not start another row until the gaps of the rows ahead are filled up.

Activity 3.2b: Congregational Prayer Graphic Symbols

Imagine you have been asked to design some signage for the prayer hall. For each of the rules of the Congregational Prayer, design a graphic symbol that could visually represent the rule, and serve as a reminder for those engaging in *Ṣalātul Jamāʿah*. The first rule has been completed for you to serve as an example.

RULE	GRAPHIC SYMBOL
1. The prayer must be led by an *imām al-jamāʿah*, or prayer leader. This leader must be a sane adult who is just, and who knows the rules of prayer, and can recite Arabic correctly.	
2. If there are any male followers, then the leader must be male. If the followers are all female, then the leader can be a female.	
3. If there is only one follower, and the follower is a male, it is best for the follower to stand to the right and slightly behind the one who leads the prayer. If the follower is a female and the imām is a male, it is best for her to stand to the right and further back such that her place of *sujūd* is in line with the feet of the imām.	
4. If there are two or more male followers, then they must all stand behind the imām without any barrier (e.g., a wall) separating them from the imām.	

5. If the imām and all of the followers are women, then they should all stand in one line, and the imām should not stand in front of the others.

6. When the imām stands in front, the gap between the imām and the rest of the congregation should be no more than one step of a person, as measured from the place of *sujūd* of the follower to the standing place of the imām.

7. The gap separating the worshipers standing side by side should be no more than one step of a person.

8. The actions of those in the congregation must not precede those of the imām. The parts of the prayer should be done in unison with, or slightly after the actions of the imām.

9. It is best for the lines of the congregation to be aligned straight, not from the place of prostration, but rather from the position of the feet. Furthermore, it is better not to start another row until the gaps of the first row ahead are filled up first.

JOINING THE CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER LATE

Sometimes, a person may reach the masjid or Islamic center a little late, and the Congregational Prayer has already started. In this case, one can still join the *ṣalāh* and gain the rewards of praying together, but there are certain specifications that need to be followed.

Let us review some scenarios about when and how a person can join the Congregational Prayer. As you read these, discuss the bold text with a partner before moving on to the next line.

I enter the masjid and see that the imām is in his first *rakʿah*, reciting the second *sūrah*. If I join the prayer, will that be considered my first *rakʿah*?	Yes, it will be. Simply join and consider it as your first *rakʿah*. You do not need to recite anything while you are standing; just listen to the rest of what the imām is reciting.
The imām is now in *rukūʿ*. If I join now, would this be considered my first *rakʿah*?	Yes, one is considered to have joined the *rakʿah* as long as they join at any time before or during the *rukūʿ*, before the imām begins to raise one's head from *rukūʿ*.
The imām has now stood up from *rukūʿ*, but they are still in the first *rakʿah*. If I join now, would that be considered my first *rakʿah*?	You **cannot** join at this time. If you join now, this will not be considered your first *rakʿah*. You have to wait until the imām gets up again for their second *rakʿah* and then join at this time.
I enter the masjid and see that the imām is in their second *rakʿah*, reciting the second *sūrah*. Can I join the prayer, and if so, then will that be considered my first *rakʿah*?	Yes, you can join the prayer and it will be considered as your first *rakʿah*. Make your intention *(niyyah)*, then do the *Takbīratul Iḥrām* (by saying *Allāhu Akbar*), and you have now joined the congregation. When the imām does *qunūt*, you can perform *qunūt* as well.

I joined the prayer while the imām was standing for their 2nd *rakʿah*. Now, the imām is doing the *tashahhud*. What should I do?

This is considered your first *rakʿah*, thus there is no *tashahhud* for you. When the imām begins the *tashahhud*, you have to place the palms and fingers of your hands on the ground, and lift your backside and heels of your foot off the ground (such that you are balancing on your hands, your toes, and the front of your soles). This position is called *tajāfī*, or 'a half-sitting-standing position.' You have to remain in this position throughout the *tashahhud* of the imām. You can optionally recite the *tashahhud* along with the imām.

After the *tashahhud* is completed, follow the imām into the standing position. This will be your second *rakʿah* and the imām's third *rakʿah*. Since the imām will not be reciting the two *sūrahs*, you have to recite them for yourself (in a whisper). You will have to go into *rukūʿ* while the imām is still in *rukūʿ*, so pace yourself accordingly. You can do *qunūt* after you finish the two *sūrahs* if there is time to still join the imām in *rukūʿ*, otherwise leave it out.

Continue following the imām in the subsequent actions: *rukūʿ*, standing after *rukūʿ*, and the two *sajdahs*. At this point, if it is a four *rakaʿāt* prayer, then the imām will stand for their fourth *rakʿah*. Remain sitting for a brief time and perform the *tashahhud*; then stand up and join the imām for your third *rakʿah*. After this *rakʿah*, it will be the imām's last *rakʿah* (and your third *rakʿah*) so when they recite the *tashahhud* and *taslīm*, you can do the *tajāfī* position and wait for them to finish, then get up and complete your last *rakʿah*; or you can just get up and finish you last *rakʿah* off.

I joined in the *rukūʿ* of the 2nd *rakʿah* of the *ʿIshāʾ* prayer; and it is my *ʿIshāʾ* prayer as well. The imām is completing the fourth *rakʿah* with *tashahhud* and *taslīm*. Do I need to pray any more *rakaʿāt*? If so, how many?

Yes, you should pray one more *rakʿah*. This is because the *rakʿah* that you join at any time before the *rukūʿ* is considered as your first *rakʿah*. Thus, although it may be the congregation's second, it is still your first *rakʿah*.

In the imām's last *rakʿah*, after the two *sajdahs*, the imām will perform the *tashahhud* and *taslīm* to end the prayer. You can stand up right when imām has sat up from the second *sajdah* to continue with your fourth *rakʿah* with the intention of praying *furādah*. Alternatively, it is better to assume the *tajāfī* position (described in the previous question-answer), and wait until the imām completes the *taslīm*. Then you can stand up to complete your last *rakʿah*.

The imām is in the *rukūʿ* of the third *rakʿah* of prayers. I do *Takbīratul Iḥrām* and join the prayer. This is considered my first *rakʿah*. True or False?

True. If you join in the *rukūʿ* of any *rakʿah*, it will be considered your first *rakʿah*, and you will have to make up any missed *rakʿah* accordingly (depending on which *ṣalāh* it is of yours).

I join the prayer as the imām is reciting *Tasbīḥātul Arbaʿah* in the third or fourth *rakʿah*. Should I recite Sūrah al-Ḥamd and the other *sūrah*?

Yes, you should recite these chapters because the imām only recites on your behalf in the first and second *rakʿah*. If you only have time to recite Sūrah al-Ḥamd, then that is enough. However, if you feel you have no time to recite even Sūrah al-Ḥamd, then wait until the imām goes into *rukūʿ* and then join them. That way, this will count as your first *rakʿah*, and you do not have to recite any of the sūrahs.

INVALIDATORS OF PRAYER

Omission or addition of certain acts

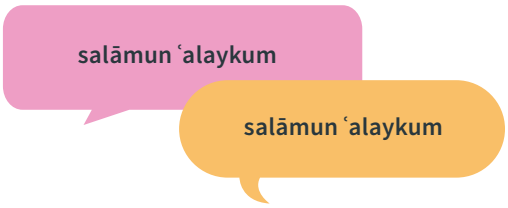
As discussed last year, adding or omitting a foundational obligation *(wājib rukn)*, whether intentionally or unintentionally, will automatically invalidate a person's prayers. If one adds or omits a non-foundational obligation *(ghayr rukn)* intentionally, then one's prayer is void; but if it is unintentionally, then there is no problem.

Below is a list of some things which can invalidate a person's prayers:

1. LAUGHING OR CRYING

If a person laughs loudly and uncontrollably, whether intentionally or unintentionally, then their prayer will become invalid. If someone laughs without emitting any voice, then their prayer will still be valid. If however, in order to control oneself, the condition of the person praying changes, like if the color of their face turns red, then as an obligatory precaution, they should pray again.

If a person cries for worldly reasons (e.g., loss of property or loss of a loved one), then their prayer will be void. If one cries for the fear of Hell, begging for Paradise, for the love of Allah ﷻ, or the pain that the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ suffered, then their prayers will be valid.



2. TALKING

Deliberately saying any words that are not part of *ṣalāh* will invalidate one's prayer. However, replying to *salām* is *wājib* even if one is praying, and the reply should be identical to the greeting. So, if someone says "*salāmun ʿalaykum*," and there is no one else who replies this greeting, then even if one is in the middle of their *ṣalāh*, they have to reply, and this reply must be "*salāmun ʿalaykum*"—or in the same wording that the original *salām* was given with. It is also important to remember that the reply must be given immediately. Not replying to *salām* does not invalidate the prayer, but it is counted as a sin. When replying to *salām* outside of the prayer, the same rule does not need to be followed, and it is perfectly fine to reply to "*salāmun ʿalaykum*" with "*ʿalaykum salām*", or "*wa ʿalaykum salām*," "*wa ʿalaykum as-salām*," etc.; and it is better to reply with an even better greeting such as "*wa ʿalaykum salām wa raḥmatullāh*."

3. EATING OR DRINKING

If a person eats or drinks intentionally during prayer, then they must repeat their prayer as it has become invalidated. However, if they swallow some food that is stuck between their teeth, then their prayer will still be valid.

Activity 3.2c: Identifying Invalidators

The table below contains situations that may arise during your prayer. Some of the situations invalidate prayers, and some do not. Using the knowledge you have gained from previous lessons, place a checkmark in the appropriate columns on the right. Upon completion, ask your teacher for the answers and give yourself a score out of 10.

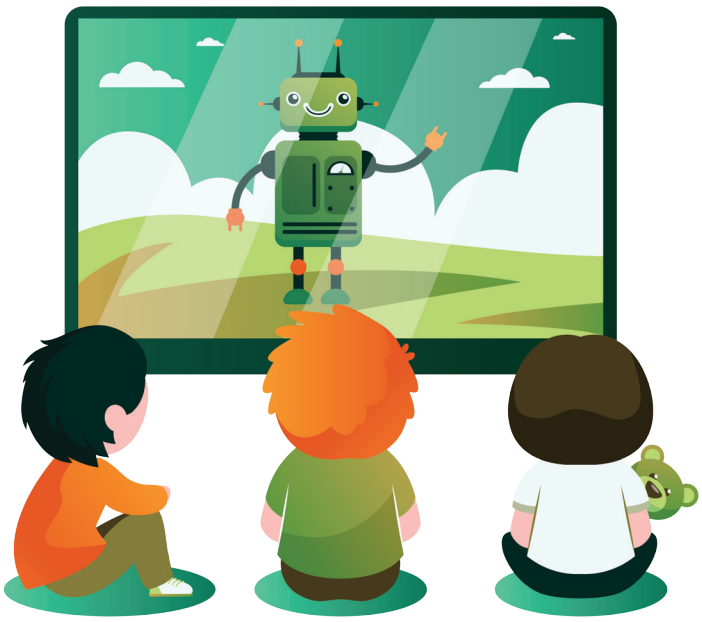
SITUATION IN PRAYER	INVALIDATES THE PRAYER	DOES NOT INVALIDATE THE PRAYER
Replying to *salāmun ʿalaykum* by saying *ʿalaykum salām*		
Wearing a shirt that is stolen		
Forgetting both *sajdahs* in the same *rakʿah*		
Crying due to fear of Hell		
Completely turning my face away from the *qiblah*		
Eating a piece of an apple while in *qiyām* (standing)		
Sleeping for only five seconds in *sajdah*		
Crying because I failed my exam		
Forgetting *tashahhud* unintentionally in the second *rakʿah*		
Laughing loudly and uncontrollably		

FURTHER ETIQUETTES OF PRAYER

So far, we have discussed the rules about those actions that invalidate the prayer. Now, let us look at some actions that may not invalidate the prayer, but are *makrūh* (disliked or better to avoid):

- Turning one's face slightly toward the right or left. Turning the face away any more than slightly, or intentionally turning the body away from the *qiblah* will invalidate one's prayer.
- Closing one's eyes.
- Fidgeting or playing with one's hands.
- Biting one's nails.
- Cracking one's knuckles.
- Being around anything that disturbs a person's concentration (e.g., praying near the TV while it is on, or being close to noisy friends).
- Praying when one has the urge to use the toilet.
- Praying when one is tired or drowsy.

One common problem is trying to pray when there is a lot of noise around us. The best way to deal with this is to find a quiet room and close the door so that the noise does not disturb us; although unfortunately, a quiet room may not always be accessible. If this is not possible, then it is important to enhance our focus and try to concentrate more on our *ṣalāh*, and block out external things. According to the narrations, children would always be around Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, sometimes they would even climb on his back while he was in *sujūd*.[4] Seeing others praying may actually serve as a good model or motivation for younger children to also pray, as they like to imitate elders.



4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 43, P. 296.

Activity 3.2d: Venn Diagram

Complete the venn diagram below, classifying which actions invalidate a person's prayers and which do not, while also keeping in mind those that must be done as obligatory precaution.

3.3 Ṣalāh: Khushūʿ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Recognize that if we have humbleness and attentiveness in our *ṣalāh* then we can reap the many benefits that it is meant to bring us.
- Develop practical ways to achieve attentiveness in our *ṣalāh*.
- Analyze the benefits of *ṣalāh* including achieving closeness to Allah ﷻ, purifying ourselves of sins, preventing future sins, and maintaining our spiritual health.

Activity 3.3a: Pre-Reading Reflection

Take time to reflect individually on your *ṣalāh* over the last week. Was there a particular *ṣalāh* or particular day where you felt that you paid more attention while offering your prayer? Was there a time where you felt you paid less attention? What may have been some of the reasons for this?

LET'S RECALL

Khushūʿ (Humbleness and Attentiveness during *Ṣalāh*)

- In order to reap the true benefits of *ṣalāh* in our lives, we need to have *khushūʿ* which means 'humbleness and internal humility.' It also incorporates having attentiveness to our position in relation to Allah's ﷻ Greatness.
- The following verse of the Qur'ān mentions that the believers who are praised are those who are humble in their prayers, and are aware that they are standing in front of Allah ﷻ.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ۝

"Indeed, successful are the believers—those who are humble in their prayers…"[1]

- When we offer our physical *ṣalāh* on time and with the necessary conditions, then our responsibility in terms of obedience to Allah ﷻ is complete and written for us. However, if we offer *ṣalāh* without internal humility *(khushūʿ)*, then we are not able to benefit from the connection and closeness to Allah ﷻ which is one of the main goals of *ṣalāh*. Narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ also confirm that only those parts of the prayer during which our attention is present are in fact accepted. The parts where we are not fully present, or do not have proper concentration will not be fruitful for us in attaining the maximum benefits of this very important act in Islam.
- Therefore, in order to improve our *ṣalāh*, we need to continuously strive to increase our focus and presence of the heart through practice and training.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʿminūn (23), Verses 1-2.

TIPS TO ATTAIN BETTER CONCENTRATION DURING ṢALĀH

In our *ṣalāh*, there are two types of humility that we should strive to achieve: *khushūʿ* which is internal humility; and *khuḍūʿ* which is external humility. *Khushūʿ* is when a person's heart and thoughts are humble and focused on Allah ﷻ. This is a direct result of understanding the Greatness and Power of Allah ﷻ. *Khuḍūʿ* refers to the humbleness of our external body in front of Allah ﷻ; and this can be seen through the set actions of *ṣalāh*, such as the *rukūʿ* and *sujūd*. As we are training ourselves on our journey to perfection, it is likely that we will first begin our *ṣalāh* with external humility *(khuḍūʿ)* with the hope and intent that this external submission to Allah ﷻ will transform into internal humility *(khushūʿ)* inshāʾAllāh!

QUR'ĀNIC CONNECTION
Khushūʿ خُشُوْعٌ humbleness

- Arabic Root Word: خ ش ع kh-sh-ʿ
- Root Meaning: to be low, to humble oneself
- Related Words: الخاشِعِينَ *(al khāshiʿīn)* the humble ones
- Reference for the word khāshiʿīn: Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 45

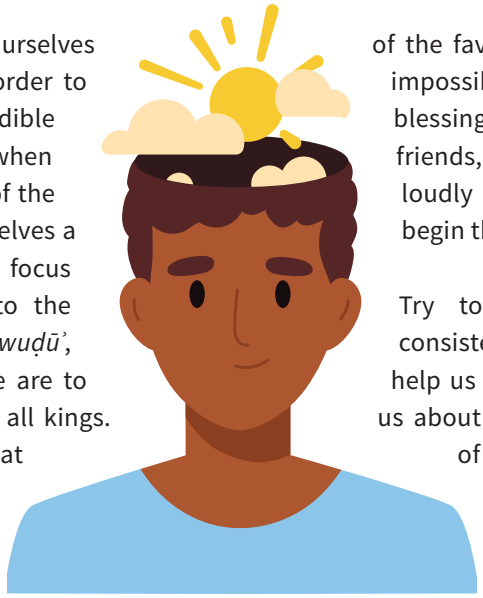
One way of trying to improve our attention during *ṣalāh* is to plan our entire day around *ṣalāh*. Often we schedule our day without thinking about *ṣalāh* and its timings, and then we squeeze *ṣalāh* somewhere in between our many other daily tasks and activities. This often means that *ṣalāh* is being squeezed in between different things, so we often rush through our *ṣalāh*, are distracted by other chores, or feel like we are on a timer to finish *ṣalāh* quickly.

If instead, we schedule our activities, meetings, and tasks around *ṣalāh* (as much as possible), and give it the quality time that it requires (which is not much at all), then we will not feel rushed or pushed for time, and are more likely to be fully present and attentive.

Have you seen how boiling water takes a few seconds to stop bubbling even after the kettle has been turned off? Similarly, all of the different wandering thoughts that we have in our minds need to be given some time to stop and settle down, once we have decided to focus on our prayers.

CLASS REFLECTION: As a class, discuss practical ways in which we can minimize distractions, and prepare our minds and hearts before we begin our *ṣalāh*.

One of the best ways to do this is to give ourselves some time before we begin to pray in order to clear our minds and get ready for this incredible meeting with our Creator. This can start when we begin our *wuḍūʾ* by having presence of the mind and heart; after that if we give ourselves a minute or so to clear our thoughts, and focus our hearts before jumping straight into the prayer. For example, when we are doing *wuḍūʾ*, we should think about how honored we are to have a private meeting with the King of all kings. Then when we are sitting on the prayer mat we should remind ourselves about all of the favors that Allah ﷻ has granted us and how impossible it would be to live our lives without the blessings around us, like our family, our health, our friends, and security. Then we should slowly and loudly recite the *adhān* and *iqāmah* before we begin the prayer.



Try to implement these steps slowly and consistently in order to see the results. They will help us to focus our mind on Allah ﷻ, and remind us about the greater purpose of our lives, instead of being lost in the day to day tasks of this worldly existence.

BENEFITS OF ṢALĀH

Ṣalāh helps a person achieve their purpose in life through its many benefits. These bounties can be obtained especially if *ṣalāh* is offered on a regular basis on time, and given its due importance. Here we will discuss some of the benefits of *ṣalāh* in order to help us further understand why we have to pray, and motivate us to give more attention when we perform our *ṣalāh*.

Activity 3.3b: Reflection

Reflect on the following *ḥadīth* regarding the Prophet's love for *ṣalāh*. Why do you think the Prophet ﷺ loved *ṣalāh* so much?

Ḥadīth #1

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Allah, may His praise be exalted, has made the delight of my eyes in ṣalāh. He has made me desire ṣalāh the way a hungry person desires food, or a thirsty person desires water. Yet, if a hungry person eats and a thirsty person drinks, they become satiated, but I never become satiated from ṣalāh."[2]

Ḥadīth #2

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said:

"The Messenger of Allah never gave precedence to a meal or anything else over ṣalāh. When the time for ṣalāh came, it was as if he did not know any friend or loved one (because of his preoccupation with offering ṣalāh immediately)."[3]

2 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* P. 10535.
3 *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* P. 10536.

Activity 3.3c:
The Benefits of Ṣalāh—Now and in the Hereafter

1. What do you think are some of the benefits of *ṣalāh*?

2. What benefits of *ṣalāh* have you noticed in your life?

3. With a partner, make a Venn diagram with the various benefits of *ṣalāh* in this world and the Hereafter.

THIS WORLD

BOTH

HEREAFTER

*Update your diagram as the lesson continues.

4. Which of these benefits will help us both in our life now and in the eternal abode? How so?

BENEFITS OF ṢALĀH

1. Attaining Closeness to Allah ﷻ

When the Noble Prophet ﷺ began his mission, one of the first things he was commanded to do was to offer *ṣalāh* in the middle of the night. In fact, from the early days of his mission, the Prophet ﷺ used to stay up most of the night offering *ṣalāh*. When the first small group of people began to accept his message and enter Islam, they also joined the Prophet ﷺ in praying most of the night.[4] Even though *ṣalāh* was not obligatory at that time, the Prophet ﷺ and his companions would voluntarily offer it for many hours during the night in order to attain closeness to Allah ﷻ. When discussing this Night Prayer *(Ṣalātul Layl)*, the Noble Qurʾān states that one of the benefits of this *ṣalāh* is that Allah ﷻ will elevate the person spiritually and bring them closer to Him.

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا ۝

"And pray for a part of the night, as a supererogatory [devotion] for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station."[5]

If we want to reach a higher spiritual station and get closer to Allah ﷻ, then one of the main ways of doing this is through *ṣalāh*. Allah ﷻ loves us so much and desires ease for us that He made it obligatory upon us to offer *ṣalāh* so that we may reach His proximity!

4 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 3, P. 445.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 79.

2. Purification from the Effects of Sins

Ṣalāh purifies us spiritually. When we commit sins, these cause a spiritual rust or dirt on our souls which act as a barrier between us and Allah ﷻ; and thus we are not able to attain our purpose of reaching our perfection and getting closer to the Almighty. *Ṣalāh* removes this dirt or rust.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said:

"If there was a stream near your house, and you washed yourself in this stream five times a day, will there remain any dirt on your body? Surely, prayer is like such a stream. A person who upholds prayer clears out one's sins with it, except for the sins that take a person out of the faith that one believes in."[6]

It is part of our nature as human beings to make mistakes and commit sins. *Ṣalāh* is an opportunity that Allah ﷻ gives us to rectify these shortcomings. What if, before every *ṣalāh* we remember our previous actions of that day, and we see our *ṣalāh* as a way of seeking forgiveness—would our lives not change in front of our eyes? We need to make sure that we give *ṣalāh* its due attention and importance so that we do not miss out on this beautiful opportunity!

3. Preventing Sins

Another benefit of *ṣalāh* is that it can prevent a person from committing sins in the first place. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

اتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ۝

"Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and establish the prayer. Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs, and the remembrance of Allah ﷻ is surely greater. And Allah ﷻ knows whatever [deeds] you do."[7]

This verse indicates that if we establish prayer (give it its due attention and importance), then it will prevent us from sinning in the first place. When we are tempted to sin, we should remember that in a few hours we will have to stand before Allah ﷻ and speak to Him, and that it would be shameful to stand before Allah ﷻ and declare our obedience and servitude to Him when we have just committed a sin. This can act as a strong deterrent to transgressing the laws of Allah ﷻ.

Ṣalāh also reminds us regularly (at least five times a day) that Allah ﷻ is the real Owner of everything in the heavens and the earth; and that we declare our servitude and obedience to Him. How can we go against the commands of the One who is the true owner of everything in existence?

There was a young man who used to regularly attend the congregational prayers at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. One time, some of the people complained to the Prophet ﷺ that this young man was engaging in a sinful act publicly. The Prophet ﷺ assured them that if this young man continued to establish his *ṣalāh* on a regular basis, then he would be able to overcome this sin.[8] Sure enough, a short time later the same people came to the Prophet ﷺ and informed him that this young man had repented for his sin and changed his lifestyle. The Prophet ﷺ attributed the positive change in this person's life to his regular observance of *ṣalāh*. Consistency is key!

6 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 82, P. 236.
7 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 45.
8 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 79, P. 198.

4. Spiritual Health

The Noble Qur'ān also indicates that *ṣalāh* protects a person against the spiritual diseases of greed, anxiety, and stinginess.

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ۝ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ۝ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ۝ إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ ۝
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ۝

"Indeed, humankind has been created anxious; when an ill befalls them (they are) distressed; and when good touches them, (they are) withholding (of it). Except those who pray—The ones who are constant in their prayers."[9]

In this verse, Allah ﷻ tells us that human beings are generally affected by greed, anxiety, and stinginess. The only exception are those who are regular in their prayers. If we give *ṣalāh* its due attention and importance, then it will protect us from these spiritual diseases. Anxiety when we do not have something, and greediness when we possess something are among the main reasons why a person becomes unhappy. Observing our *ṣalāh* on a regular basis and giving it the attention that it deserves will help protect us from these spiritual diseases which lead to unhappiness.

TRY THIS AT HOME:

Let us make a plan for this week! Every day, try to give yourself three minutes extra on your prayer mat before you begin your *ṣalāh*. Or, go through the process of preparing for *ṣalāh* in a slower and more thoughtful way—enjoying each step of the process. Remind yourself that your task list can wait, and try to focus on this grand meeting with the King of kings. Think about Allah's Power and Greatness in relation to you, then raise your hands to your ears, throwing all of your worries behind, and say: *Allāhu Akbar*!

9 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Maʿārij (70), Verses 19-23.

Activity 3.3d: Prayer Mat Insert

Getting my Heart Ready for Ṣalāh

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۝
الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ۝

"Indeed, successful are the believers—
those who are humble in their prayers…" [10]

1. Take a deep breath.
2. Remind yourself that your tasks for this world are temporary and can wait, while your *ṣalāh* will be the source of your happiness in this temporary life and more importantly, the Hereafter.
3. Think about whom you are going to meet. The King of kings has invited you to a personal meeting! Remember your neediness in relation to His Needlessness and Greatness.
4. Stand for prayer with the resolution to keep your heart present, and as it strays, try to bring it back to Allah ﷻ every time that it gets distracted.

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʿminūn (23), Verses 1-2.

CHAPTER 4

Further Furūʿ ad-Dīn

4.1 Fasting

4.2 Charity: Khums and Zakāh

4.1 Fasting

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify what makes the month of Ramaḍān a noble and special month in Islam, and the types of blessings that have been promised to those who strive toward perfection and closeness to Allah ﷻ.
- Outline the spiritual benefits of fasting, and how our entire body should participate in this abstinence.
- Discuss the importance and process of making the intention for fasting.
- Review and explore those things which invalidate a fast.
- Identify those individuals who are exempt from fasting, and discuss certain illnesses in particular, as a reason for not being able to fast.
- List the criteria for making up missed fasts.
- Resolve any remaining questions about fasting by looking at further scenarios, and the advice on how each situation can be handled.

THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

The month of Ramaḍān is a very sacred and special month in Islam. In it, we have the honor of being the guests of Allah ﷻ; and we are commanded to fast in obedience to Him, and in return we will attain many treasures—some of which include self-control, self-restraint, and God-consciousness *(taqwā)*. The month of Ramaḍān is full of immeasurable blessings and mercy.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some positive habits and changes you make in your daily life during the month of Ramaḍān?

The Noble Prophet ﷺ gave us the special gift of a beautiful sermon in which he explains the greatness of this month and the rewards of our actions. Let us look at some excerpts from this sermon so that we can better understand the importance of this month:[1]

- "O people, surely the month of Allah is approaching you with blessings, mercy, and forgiveness."
- "In the eyes of Allah, it is the best month. Its days are the best days, and its nights are the best nights."
- "It is a month in which you are invited to be the noble guests of Allah."
- "In this month, your actions are accepted, and your *duʿās* are answered."
- "In this month, the doors of Paradise are open, and the doors of Hell are closed."

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 93, P. 356.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some actions that are highly recommended to do during the month of Ramaḍān?

In the next part of this sermon, the Prophet ﷺ lists some of the recommended things in this noble month, along with their rewards.

As we reflect on these actions, we understand that Allah ﷻ has given us many paths and avenues to gain closeness to Him, and work toward our perfection during this noble month.

For example, he said:

- "A person who feeds a fasting believer, Allah will grant them freedom from the Hell-fire, and will forgive their sins."
- "A person who improves their manners *(akhlāq)* during this month, Allah will grant them an easy passage over the bridge *(ṣirāṭ)* on the Day of Judgment."
- "One who honors an orphan in this month, Allah will honor them on that Day when He meets them [this is in reference to the metaphysical meeting that we will all have with Allah on the Day of Judgment]."
- "One who maintains the ties of family and kinship, Allah will maintain the ties of mercy with them."
- "One who offers a recommended prayer *(mustaḥab ṣalāh)* during this month, Allah will write safety for them from the Hell-fire."
- "A person who offers an obligatory prayer *(wājib ṣalāh)* during this month, Allah will give them the reward of seventy obligatory prayers offered in other months."
- "One who frequently offers *ṣalawāt* upon the Prophet, Allah will make their scale of good deeds heavy on the Day of Judgment."
- "A person who recites one verse *(āyah)* of the Qurʾān in this month, Allah will give them the reward of one who recites the entire Qurʾān in another month."

FEED A FASTING BELIEVER

IMPROVE AKHLĀQ

HONOR AN ORPHAN

MAINTAIN FAMILY TIES

MUSTAḤAB ṢALĀḤ

OBLIGATORY ṢALĀḤ

ṢALAWĀT UPON THE PROPHET ﷺ

RECITE NOBLE QUR'ĀN

Activity 4.1a: Month of Ramaḍān Goal Setting

Using the sentence starters below, set some goals for yourself so that you can acquire the immense rewards listed in the noble Prophet's sermon. Then, in each box of the graphic organizer provided, finish the phrase with a practical goal for a future or upcoming month of Ramaḍān.

One aspect of my character and manners (akhlāq) that I can improve during this month is…

One way I can maintain the ties of family and kinship better is…

This month of Ramaḍān, I would like to strive to…

I will recite the following sūrahs of the Noble Qurʾān during this month…

I will offer ṣalawāt upon the Prophet ﷺ every time I…

I can participate in feeding a fasting believer by…

I can honor an orphan this month by…

FASTING IN THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon those before you, so that perhaps you may achieve God-consciousness [(taqwā) and become righteous]."[2]

Allah ﷻ made it obligatory upon us to fast during the month of Ramaḍān. During this month, from *Fajr* to *Maghrib* time, we must abstain from eating, drinking, and other things (which have been specified in the books of Islamic rulings of our *marājiʿ*) in order to gain proximity to Allah ﷻ.

The act of fasting is highly rewarding, and has many spiritual, physical, and health benefits.

The narrations below explain some of the spiritual benefits of fasting:

- "Fasting will be a **shield** from the fire of Hell."[3]
- "For everything there is a ***zakāh* (purification)**, and the purification of the body is fasting."[4]
- "In order to enter Paradise, there is a **door named *ar-Rayyān***, and only those who fasted (in this world) will be (permitted to) enter through it."[5]
- "If, by fasting, a person holds themselves back from food which they craved, then Allah will make it incumbent upon Himself to give that person from the **food and drink of Paradise**."[6]

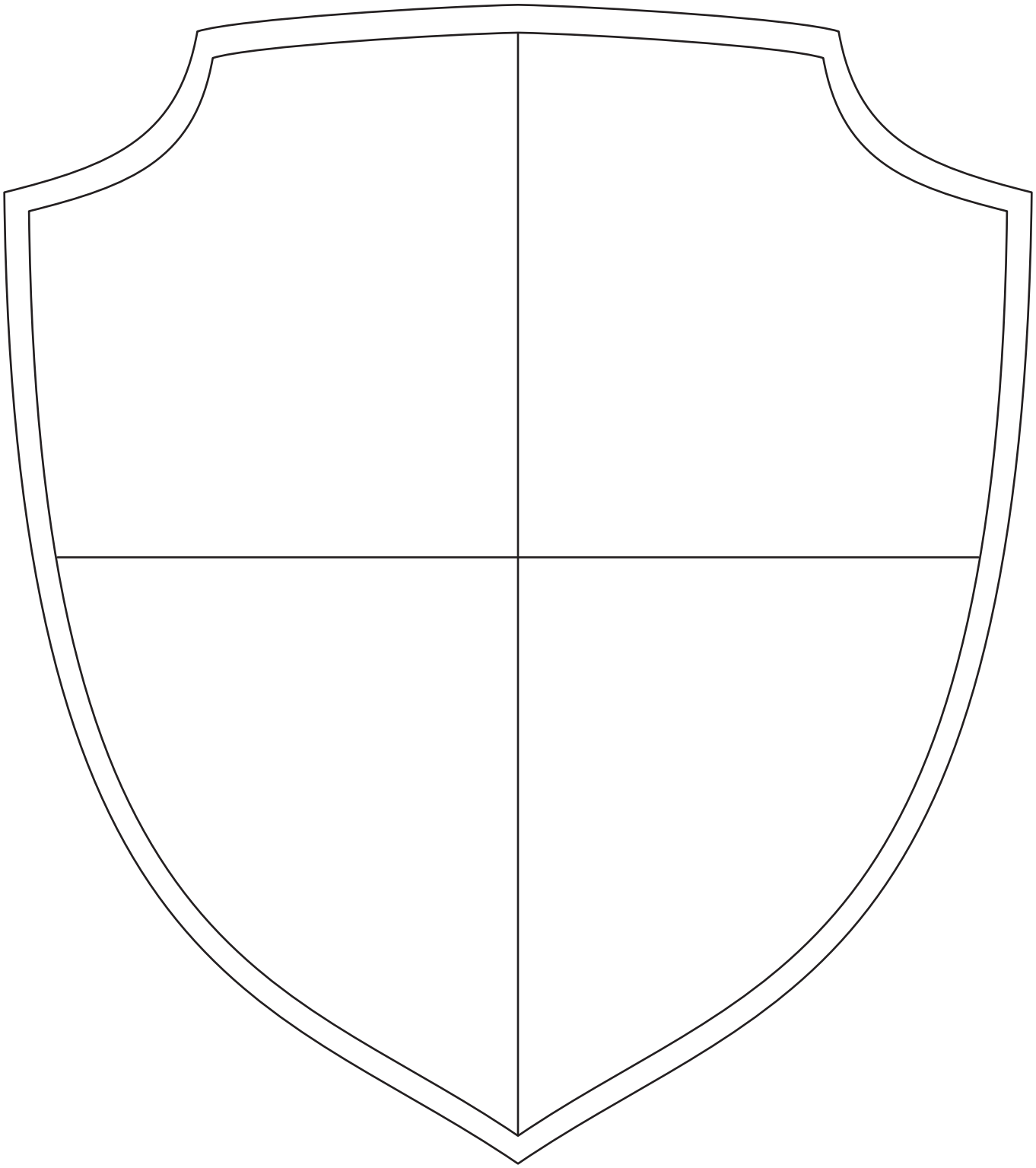
STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think these specific things have been listed as spiritual benefits of fasting? Do they somehow correlate to the act of fasting?

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 183.
3 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth #10923.
4 *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth #10925.
5 *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth #10933.
6 *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth #10935.

Activity 4.1b: Design a Shield for the month of Ramaḍān

Although the shield in the narration from the book, *Mizān al-Ḥikmah*, is meant to be an analogy, imagine if your actions every month of Ramaḍān could actually manifest into a shield. What would it look like?

Using the template below, design a shield for yourself that represents what fasting means to you. You can include the items you abstain from as part of your design; or the rewards you hope to attain that will grant you entrance into Paradise; or other representations you associate with this sacred month.



FASTING OF ALL OF THE BODY PARTS

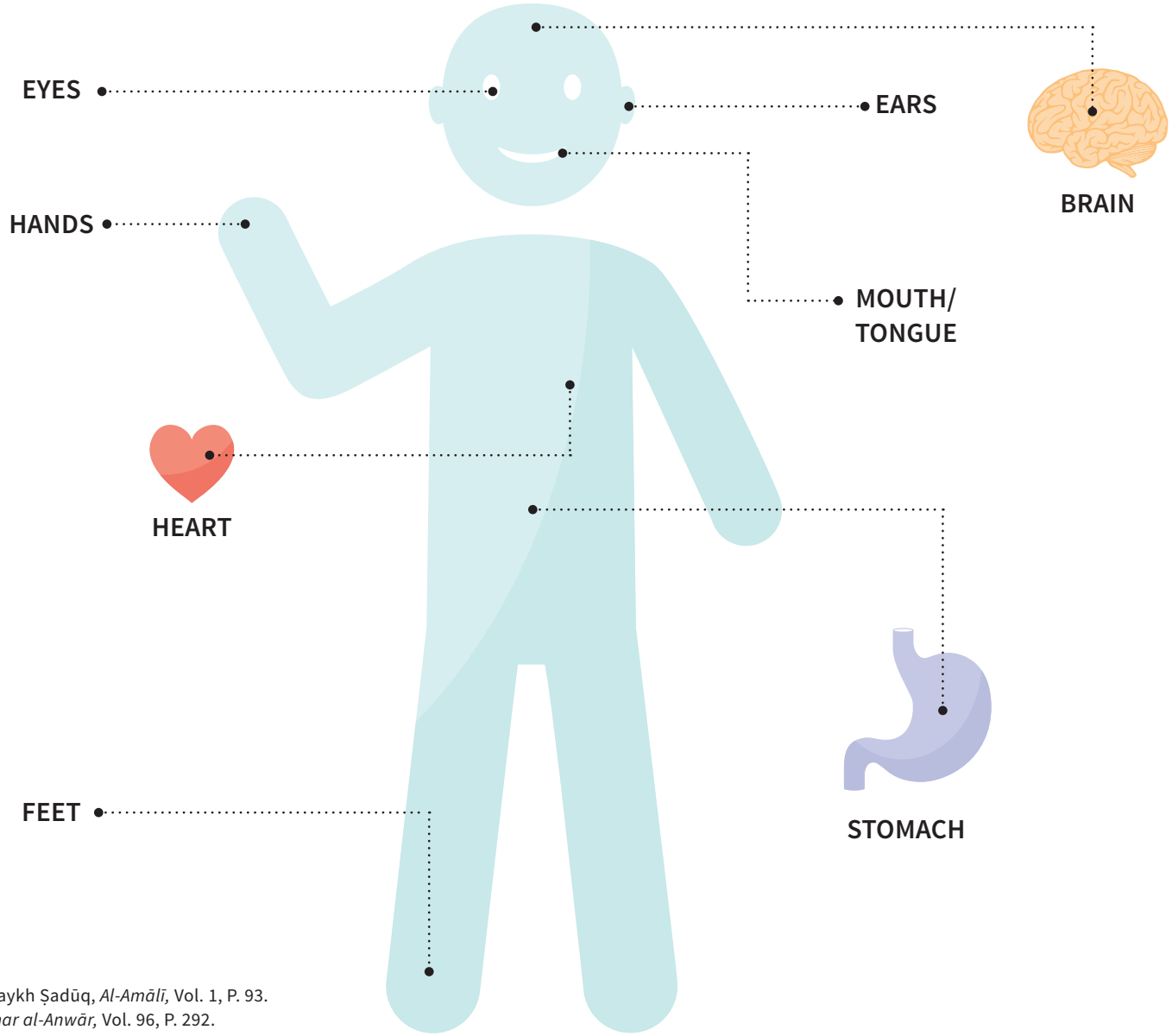
The Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ have taught us that in order to truly gain the rewards of fasting, it should not only be a fast from food, water, and the other jurisprudential invalidators of fasting. Rather, all of our body parts should be fasting from any type of sin. In fact, at the end of the above sermon of the Prophet ﷺ, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ asked the Prophet ﷺ what the best action during the month of Ramaḍān is? The Prophet ﷺ replied that the best action is to avoid that which Allah ﷻ has forbidden (made *ḥarām*).[7]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

"When you fast, let your hearing and sight abstain from everything unlawful, and (prevent) all of your limbs from (committing) anything ugly; do not say foolish things; and do not harm those who serve you. Rather, adorn yourself with the dignity of the fast…and do not make your fasting day the same as the day when you are not fasting."[8]

Activity 4.1c: Fasting of all of the Body Parts

Using the diagram below, label each organ with one thing they could abstain from during the month of Ramaḍān.



7 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī,* Vol. 1, P. 93.
8 *Biḥar al-Anwār,* Vol. 96, P. 292.

THE INTENTION TO FAST

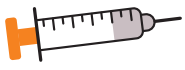
Fasting means that a person abstains from a number of acts (which will be mentioned later) from the time of the *Fajr* prayer until *Maghrib* time. An important part of fasting is the intention to fast. Before we fast, we have to know in our mind that we are fasting an obligatory fast for the month of Ramaḍān, and that we are doing this in obedience to Allah ﷻ.

The time for the intention of the obligatory fast is specific. A person can make the intention either:

1. Before the beginning of *Fajr*, every morning one fasts.
2. At the beginning of the month of Ramaḍān, at which time one can make the intention to fast every single day for the upcoming month.

The way that we know that the month of Ramaḍān has started is by sighting the crescent moon of the month of Ramaḍān the night before, or when 30 days of the month of Shaʿbān have passed. We also determine the end of the month of Ramaḍān and the day of Eid by sighting the crescent moon of the month of Shawwāl, or when 30 days of the month of Ramaḍān have passed.

Here are the rulings on some of the actions that vary according to different *marājiʿ*:

ACTION	ĀYATULLĀH SĪSTĀNĪ	ĀYATULLĀH KHAMENEI	NOTES
Swallowing phlegm/mucus that comes up and goes into your mouth	It is okay to swallow it if it has not entered the cavity of the mouth. If it enters into the cavity of the mouth, then the recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* is not to swallow it.	It is okay to swallow it if it has not entered the cavity of the mouth. If it enters into the cavity of the mouth and you intentionally swallow it, then your fast will become invalid.	Swallowing saliva does not invalidate the fast.
Submerging your head underwater	It is severely reprehensible *(makrūh)* and recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* to avoid this.	According to obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*, the fast becomes invalid if someone intentionally submerges their entire head underwater while one is in the state of fasting.	This rule does not apply to going for a shower. This rule applies to swimming, unless a person is able to ensure that one's entire head does not go underwater at any one time. Therefore, swimming while fasting is not advisable.
Injections or IV drips 	Injections and IV drips do not invalidate the fast.	The fast is valid if it is injected into the muscles, and is for treatment purposes (not for nutrition). Intravenous injections (which are injected into the veins) that are for nutritional purposes invalidate the fast.	

Activity 4.1d: Group Activity

In Grade 7, we learned about the invalidators of the fast. Get into your groups, and try to review the rulings and complete the table below—identifying whether the fast is valid or invalid in each situation. The completed table with the answers is at the end of the lesson.

ACTION	ON PURPOSE	BY ACCIDENT	NOTES
Eating or drinking			
Swallowing something stuck between your teeth			
Brushing your teeth			
Rinsing your mouth out with water			
Inhalers			
Using eye drops, ear drops, or nose sprays			
Throwing up			
Inhaling thick smoke			
Swallowing thick dust			
Attributing a lie to Allah ﷻ or the Maʿṣūmīn ﷺ			
Swallowing phlegm or mucus that comes up and goes into your mouth			
Submerging your head underwater			
Injections or IV drips			

PEOPLE WHO ARE EXEMPT FROM FASTING

In various situations, certain people are exempt from fasting:

- A pregnant woman for whom fasting may be harmful for her or her unborn baby.
- A woman who is breastfeeding her infant from her own milk if fasting will affect her supply of milk in a way that is harmful for her or her child.
- A person who finds it impossible or excessively difficult to fast due to old age.
- Someone who has a condition in which fasting could significantly harm their health by making them sick or causing damage to their body.

  One of the ways of knowing whether fasting is harmful for a person's health is if it is confirmed by a qualified health professional, and the person is satisfied by this opinion.
- A traveller who is travelling out of town a certain distance (approx 28 miles/44 km roundtrip) from the border of their hometown, if certain other conditions are met.

FASTING AND SICKNESS

The laws that Allah ﷻ sets for us are merciful laws. They are not meant to cause us intolerable difficulty or harm. Thus, there are certain rules for fasting if someone is sick:

- If a person knows or has a reasonable fear that they will get sick or be harmed by fasting, then they should not fast; and if they still do fast, then it will not be valid.
- If an individual is sick, and they know or have a reasonable fear that fasting will: **(1)** Make them more sick, **(2)** Increase their pain, **(3)** Delay their recovery, then they should not fast; and if they still do fast, then their fast will not be valid.
- If a person is sick, but fasting will not be harmful to their health, then they must fast, and their fast will be valid.
- Sickness does not include normally acceptable/bearable levels of hunger, thirst, weariness, headaches, or other difficulties that go away within a couple of hours after *iftār*. Such things are usually considered tolerable by rational people.

MISSED FASTS

If a person misses a fast due to a valid reason, such as illness or travel, then they need to make up that fast. Making up a missed fast is done with the intention of *qaḍāʾ*. In some cases, in addition to the *qaḍāʾ*, one must also pay a tax called ***fidyah***—which involves feeding a poor believer 750g of food staple for each missed day. For example, if someone did not make up the *qaḍāʾ* of a fast(s) before the next month of Ramaḍān, then they have to pay *fidyah* (and the *qaḍāʾ* of those fasts still have to be made up whenever they are able to make them up). If someone misses a fast without a valid reason, then they must make up that fast and also offer a ***kaffārah***, which is a penalty that we will learn about later.

Activity 4.1e: Fasting FAQs Fact-Checking Activity

Imagine that you are doing an internship with the local scholar of your Islamic Center to answer questions, and under their guidance, you are responsible for moderating a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) column that will appear in your local Islamic Center newsletter. The month of Ramaḍān issue is coming up, and the following questions have been submitted by readers of the column. You are responsible for gathering the correct information to formulate an accurate and instructive response to each question. Using the guidance given in this lesson, provide readers with the facts and solutions for the following situations or questions. After you have filled it in, you can check your answers at the end of the lesson.

FAQ COLUMN QUESTION	YOUR FINDINGS OR SOLUTION
1. **I missed *suḥūr*. Should I still fast?**	
2. **My parents told me not to fast. Do I have to listen to them?**	
3. **I drank water and ate something by mistake.**	
4. **It is the first night of the month of Ramaḍān. What should I do?**	
5. **I missed my *Fajr* prayer. Is my fast still valid?**	
6. **I play a lot of sports so I get very thirsty.**	
7. **I often think about breaking my fast during the daytime.**	
8. **It was the time for *Fajr ṣalāh* and I was still eating.**	
9. **I saw a nice quote attributed to Imām ʿAlī on social media, so I forwarded it.**	
10. **I use a prayer timetable for *ṣalāh* in order to establish when to break my fast.**	
11. **I missed some fasts that I was not able to keep due to an illness, thus I have to make up the *qaḍāʾ*, when should I make them up by?**	

Activity 4.1d: Answer Key

INVALIDATORS OF THE FAST

✗ FAST IS INVALID ✓ FAST IS VALID

ACTION	ON PURPOSE	BY ACCIDENT	NOTES
Eating or drinking	✗	✓	If you accidentally swallow food particles that remain between the teeth, then your fast is valid; but if you do so on purpose, then your fast will become invalidated
Brushing your teeth	✓	✓	Fast is valid as long as you do not swallow any external water, toothpaste, or saliva that has been mixed with the toothpaste
Rinsing mouth with water	✓	✓	Fast is valid as long as you do not swallow any water deliberately
Inhalers	✓	✓	These go into your lungs, not your food pipe, thus they are okay to use
Using eye drops, ear drops, or nose sprays	✓	✓	It is not permissible to apply any medicine, or put water, or any other substance in the eyes, ears, or through the nose if you know that the substance will reach the throat. If it reaches the throat, then your fast will be invalid. Āyatullāh Khamenei says that it is *makrūh* to apply medicine through the nose (e.g. nasal sprays) when fasting.
Throwing up	✗	✓	Intentionally vomiting—for example, if someone has a queasy stomach and they make themselves cough in order to vomit—this will cause the fast to become invalid. Also, stomach acid or food that comes up when belching should not be swallowed intentionally.
Inhaling thick smoke	✗ [according to obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*]	✓	Examples of thick smoke: • Smoke from cigarettes or tobacco • Smoke from the exhaust of a truck, or a fire We are allowed to inhale steam, but if it condenses in the mouth and turns into water, then if you swallow it on purpose, your fast will become invalid.
Swallowing thick dust	✗ [according to obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*]	✓	An example of thick dust is dusty air from sweeping a very dusty ground. If the dust reaches the throat, then it will break one's fast. If thin dust in the air reaches the throat, then this will not invalidate the fast. If thick dust is whipped up by the wind, and a person notices it but is not careful to avoid it, then by allowing this dust to reach one's throat, the fast will become void on the basis of obligatory precaution.
Attributing a lie to Allah ﷻ or the Maʿṣūmīn ﷺ	✗ [according to obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*]	✓	If you want to quote a *ḥadīth* or verse of the Qurʾān, then make sure to be accurate about it and give the reference. If you are not sure in regards to it, then report it in such a way that it is not directly attributed to the Prophet ﷺ or the Imāms ﷺ. For example, one can say: *"It has been narrated by…that he said…"* Quotes attributed to the Prophet ﷺ or the Imāms ﷺ on social media are sometimes inaccurate, and often do not include a reference. Be careful about forwarding/reposting these quotes, especially when one is fasting.

Activity 4.1e: Answer Key

FASTING FAQS

1.	**I missed *suḥūr*. Should I still fast?**	Yes, you still have to fast. If during the day, the fast is causing you harm, or there is a reasonable fear that if you continue the fast, it will cause you intense harm, then if you need to you can break the fast.
2.	**My parents told me not to fast. Do I have to listen to them?**	If you have reached the age of religious responsibility *(bulūgh)*, and you have no valid exemption from fasting, then you must fast even if your parents tell you not to.
3.	**I drank water and ate something by mistake.**	This does not invalidate your fast. You can continue to fast as normal.
4.	**It is the first night of the month of Ramaḍān. What should I do?**	Make the intention that you will fast the entire month in obedience to Allah ﷻ, and to gain nearness to Him.
5.	**I missed my *Fajr* prayer. Is my fast still valid?**	Yes it is valid. However, we must try to be extra careful of our duties and responsibilities especially during this special month so our fasts can be accepted in the best possible manner.
6.	**I play a lot of sports so I get very thirsty.**	We should modify our activities during the month of Ramaḍān so that we do not tire ourselves out too much, or make fasting more difficult upon us. Simply being thirsty is not a reason to be able to break the fast. However, if you become sick, or intense harm will come to you because of the thirst, then you can break your fast.
7.	**I often think about breaking my fast during the daytime.**	The thought of breaking the fast passing through our mind does not break the fast. However, if we make an intention to break the fast, then our fast is immediately void even if we do not actually end up eating or drinking, or doing other things that invalidate the fast.
8.	**It was the time for *Fajr ṣalāh* and I was still eating.**	If this was by accident (e.g., mistaking the time), then your fast is valid; otherwise, it is void.
9.	**I saw a nice quote attributed to Imām ʿAlī ؑ on social media, so I forwarded it.**	We should not say or share words attributed to Allah ﷻ, the Prophet ﷺ, or the Ahlul Bayt ؑ unless we are absolutely certain that they are authentic. It is safer not to forward such quotes without verifying their source.
10.	**I use a prayer timetable for *ṣalāh* in order to establish when to break my fast.**	If the timetable provides you with surety that this is the correct time for *Fajr* and *Maghrib*, then this is fine. Otherwise, add some minutes of precaution to make sure that you are fasting during the prescribed time.
11.	**I missed some fasts that I was not able to keep due to an illness, thus I have to make up the *qaḍāʾ*, when should I make them up by?**	Try to make them up as soon as possible. It is important to make up fasts missed from the previous month of Ramaḍān before the next one comes around. If a person is not able to do so, then one has to pay *fidyah*.

4.2 Charity: Khums and Zakāh

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define *zakāh* as a general form of charity.
- Breakdown the forms of *zakāh* (types of charities) into categories, with a focus on the jurisprudence of the obligatory types of financial charities in Islam.
- Outline the nine specific items which fall under the obligation of giving *zakāh* on.
- Define *Zakātul Fiṭr* as a specific form of charity that becomes obligatory on the head of the family every year at the end of the month of Ramaḍān, and quantify the amount required to fulfill this obligation.
- Define and exemplify *ṣadaqah*.
- Define *khums* as an obligatory form of charity—expressly mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān—which entails giving 20% of our savings or unused material possessions in charity at the end of a year.
- Detail the conditions of *khums*, how it should be paid and distributed; as well as the value and importance of this charitable act of worship.

Allah says in the Qurʾān:

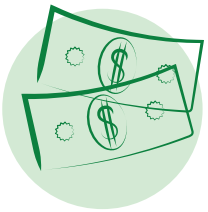
قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَالٌ

"Say to My servants who believe that they should establish prayer, and spend out of what We have given them—secretly and openly—before the coming of a Day in which there will be no exchanging, nor any friendships."[1]

We discussed last year that being charitable is one of the most emphasized actions in Islam. It is an essential part of our religion. In the Noble Qurʾān, it is usually paired with *ṣalāh*.

When the Noble Qurʾān describes the believers, the first part of the description is usually as "those who establish prayer (uphold *ṣalāh*), and give charity *(zakāh)*."

We have also discussed that *zakāh* can take on many forms, some of which include:



- **Financial help**
  such as paying *ṣadaqah*, *khums*, (specific) *zakāh*.
- **Give some time**
  such as giving up our time to help a person with a particular task.
- **Help with skills and education**
  such as using our skills or talents to help someone who requires those specific skills, or teaching them the necessary skills so that they can use them in the future.

- **Share some kind words**
  sometimes we are unable to help in any of the above ways, but we can make a person feel better about their situation by listening to them, and saying kind or helpful words to them.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 31.

Below is a list of some of the different types of charities with some brief details:

TYPES OF CHARITY

EDUCATION

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"The zakāh of knowledge is to share it with those who are worthy of it, and practice it ourselves (with our Nafs and our actions)."*[2]

HELPING OTHERS

As mentioned above, this can be in many different ways.

WEALTH

Recommended (Mustaḥab)	**GENERAL ALMS** *(ṣadaqah)*
	GENERAL DONATIONS *(khayrāt)*
Obligatory (Wājib)	**ZAKĀH:** A specified percentage (for example, 2.5%, or 10%, or 20%) given on specific items with certain conditions.
	ZAKĀTUL FIṬR: This is an obligatory *(wājib)* charity that must be given on the day of *Eidul Fiṭr* by the head of the family for each of his/her dependents.
	NADHR/ʿAHD (CONDITIONAL PROMISE): When a person makes a verbal promise between Allah ﷻ and oneself to give some charity. This promise must meet certain guidelines
	QASAM (OATH): When a person swears by Allah ﷻ to give something in charity
	KAFFĀRAH (PENALTY) • During the month of Ramaḍān under certain conditions. • Some sins entail a penalty to be paid. • Breaking a *qasam* (oath) that one made to Allah ﷻ. • *Ḥajj*— if certain rules are broken.
	KHUMS: 20% tax on certain things after one year

In this lesson, we will focus on the jurisprudence of the different obligatory types of financial charity in Islam.

2 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Vol. 1, P. 391.

STOP AND REFLECT: Have you taken part in any of the above types of charity? If so, was it a recommended *(mustaḥab)* or an obligatory *(wājib)* act of charity?

ZAKĀH

The word *zakāh* has a general meaning which applies to all forms of charity. When it is used in the Noble Qurʾān, it is usually used in this meaning. However, it also has a more specific meaning in jurisprudence.

SPECIFIC YEARLY ZAKĀH

This is one of the obligatory forms of charity which was very important in previous times. It does not apply to many people today. It is a certain type of charity which applies to only nine specific things, as outlined in the following narration from Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ:

"Allah made it obligatory—along with the prayers—the zakāh of wealth. Then, the Messenger of Allah obligated zakāh with regards to nine things, and excused other things from zakāh. (The nine things which he obligated are): gold, silver, camels, cows, sheep, wheat, barley, dates, and raisins. The Messenger of Allah excused other things from this (type of) zakāh." [3]

This type of charity does not really have much application to people other than farmers in today's world; or those individuals who may buy gold or silver as investments. They have to pay the specified value of any of the nine things listed above which they own. For example, a farmer who has five camels that graze in open pastures would have to give one sheep as *zakāh*; likewise, a farmer who has at least 847 kg (1867 lb) of wheat has to give 1/10th of it as *zakāh* if the wheat crop was watered naturally, and 1/20th of it as *zakāh* if it was watered manually.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What do the nine items for which Allah ﷻ has obligated *zakāh* have in common? Why would these items hold the potential for being considered "wealth" such that one has to pay a "tax" on them?

3 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 3, P.509.

ZAKĀTUL FIṬR

This is another specific form of obligatory charity which applies to us today. It becomes obligatory on the head of the family every year at the end of the month of Ramaḍān.

On the night before Eid (from the time that the crescent moon of the month of Shawwāl is sighted—marking the end of the month of Ramaḍān—until the next day some time before the Eid prayer), this money or food intended for *Zakātul Fiṭr* must be paid or transferred to a person worthy of it.

The head of the family needs to count the number of people in their family who are under their care, and for each person, three kilograms (6.6 lb) of a food staple (such as rice, corn, or wheat) used in their local area, or its cash equivalent, must be given to a poor believer. A person should first ascertain if there are deserving believers in one's own town, and if there are, then they take priority in receiving the *Zakātul Fiṭr*. In the absence of this, the *Zakātul Fiṭr* can be sent to other towns.

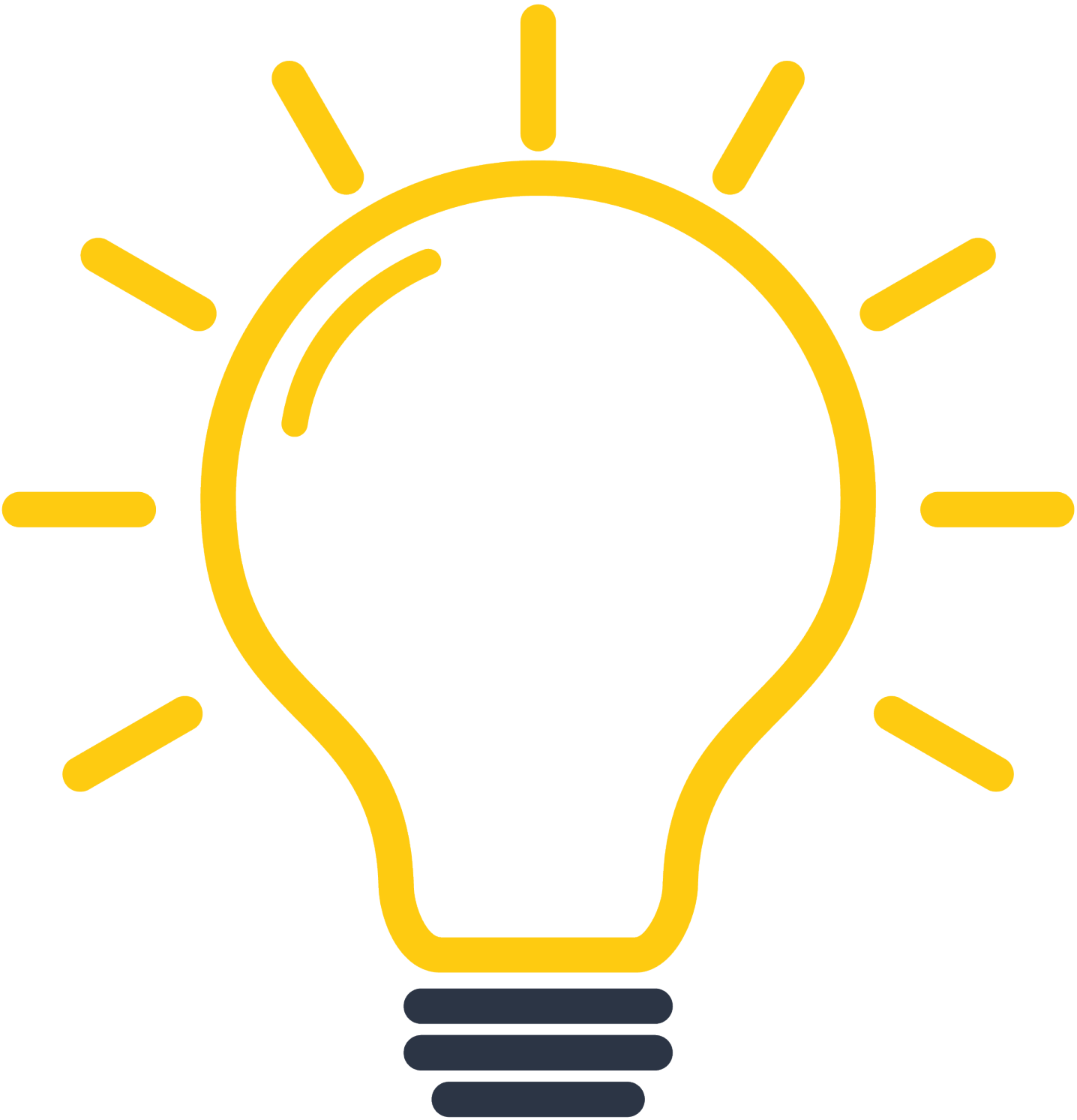
If a person cannot directly take the food staple, or its equivalent financial value, to a deserving person, then one can pay the cash amount to a trusted Islamic organization who can then distribute it on one's behalf. Usually, your local qualified scholar will calculate the value of three kilograms of such food, and advise how much should be paid per person.

QUESTION: If I invite some guests over to my house the night before Eid for dinner, then do I need to pay the *Zakātul Fiṭr* on their behalf the next day?

ANSWER: No. A person is only responsible for *Zakātul Fiṭr* if that guest is truly dependent upon them (i.e. living under their care at that time). If a guest simply comes over for dinner and leaves a few hours later, then the host is **not** responsible for paying that guest's *Zakātul Fiṭr*.

Activity 4.2a: Making Connections

Why does it make sense for us to end a month of fasting with this act of obligatory charity *(Zakātul Fiṭr)*? In the lightbulb graphic below, brainstorm the moral(s), or lesson(s) that might be encased in this particular act of charity?



ṢADAQAH

Ṣadaqah refers to general charity, or charity which is not a part of *zakāh* or *khums*. It includes any wealth that we spend for the sake of Allah ﷻ. Some examples may be the following:

- Helping a poor or needy person with food or other essentials like clothing or medicine.
- Helping an orphan child with their education or other general care.
- Helping with projects that empower people and communities to come out of poverty.

Activity 4.2b: Quick-Write

Can you add to the above list with examples of your own, perhaps from your personal experiences, where else we might be able to assist others with *ṣadaqah*?

KHUMS

Khums literally means one-fifth (20%), and it is an obligatory form of charity that has been expressly mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān, which has also been particularly emphasized by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

"And know that whatever of a thing you acquire, a fifth of it is for Allah, for the Messenger, for the near relative, the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer..."[4]

Khums is the most important type of charity which we need to know about and practice today.

In brief, it involves giving one-fifth (20%) of our savings as charity at the end of the year. There are other things upon which *khums* becomes obligatory as well.

WHAT IS KHUMS APPLICABLE ON?

Khums must be paid on the following things:

Any savings which a person has left over after their (legitimate) annual living expenses have been met. An individual should set a *khums* date for oneself. Every year, when that date comes, the person needs to go over their finances and work out how much money they saved during that year. Then they need to pay 20% of this as *khums* with the intention of obedience to Allah ﷻ and gaining proximity to Him.

For example, Ahmad started working at his uncle's fruit shop in March 2012. Now it is March 2013, and he has $200 saved in his bank account, after he bought whatever was necessary (like clothes or food) throughout the year. He needs to calculate 20% of this (so $40) and give this as *khums*.

With regards to material possessions that we bought with money that would have been eligible for *khums*, and which we have not used, or that we no longer need when our *khums* date arrives:

Āyatullāh Sīstānī:

- If they are things which are usually kept for succeeding years, then khums does not need to be paid on them (e.g. winter and summer clothes that are not needed now, but will be needed again when the seasons change).
- If they are not such things, then as per obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*, *khums* should be paid on their value.

Āyatullāh Khamenei:

- If at the time of purchase, they were things which would be considered appropriate for a person's social status, and they are still things that we need, then *khums* will not be payable on them even if they have not been used by one's *khums* date.

With regards to gifts that we receive which have not been used during the year, when a person's *khums* date arrives:

Āyatullāh Sīstānī:

- *Khums* applies to any wealth with monetary value, and this includes gifts and prizes that one attains.

Āyatullāh Khamenei:

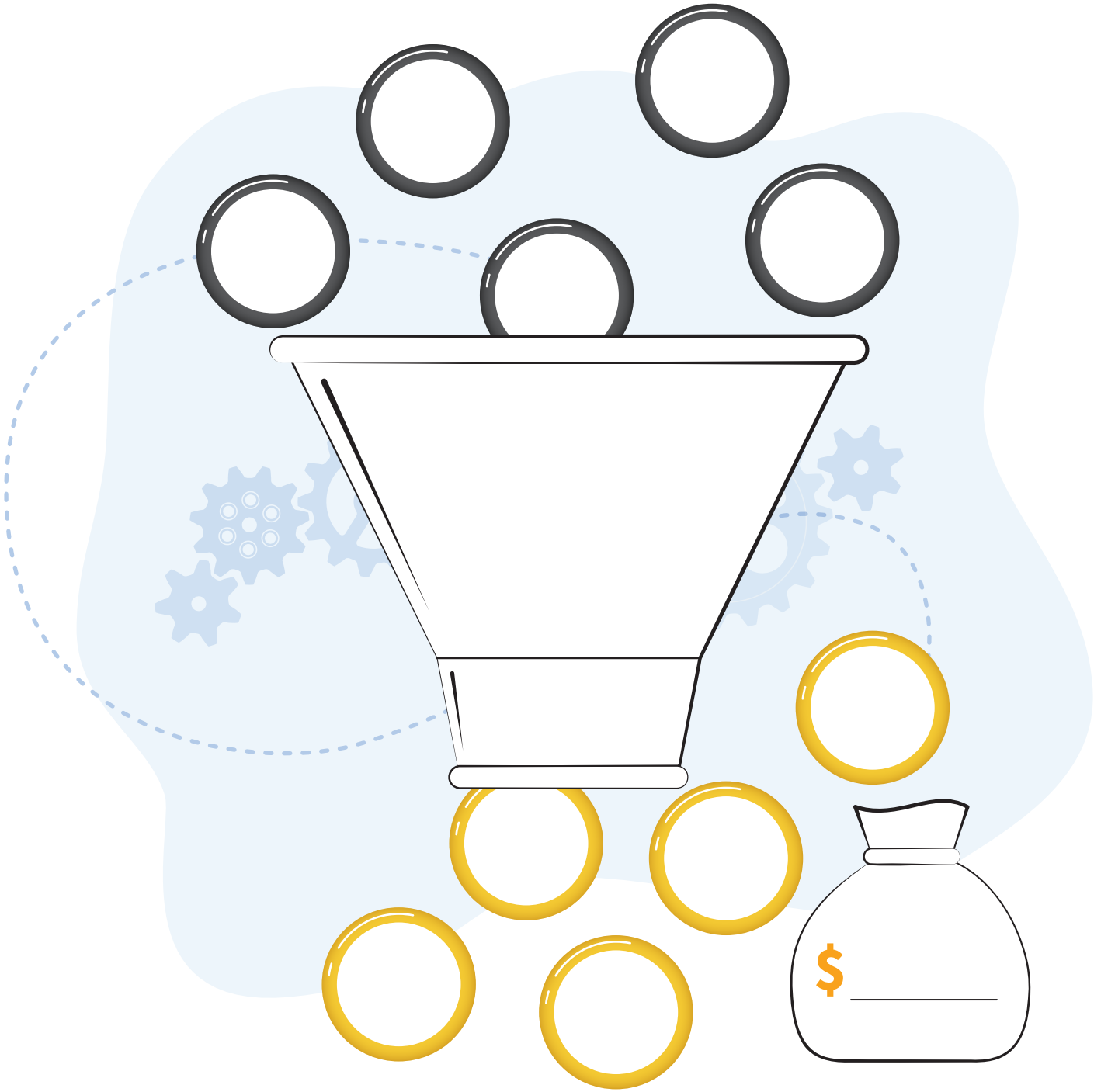
- Gifts and prizes are not liable to *khums* if they are gifted with a sincere intention and compatible with the social status of the receiving party.

If a person purchased something which does not meet the criteria above for one's *marjaʿ* and they did not use it for a whole year, then at the time of one's *khums* date, they must calculate its current market value and pay 20% of that as *khums*. If the price went down (from when it was originally bought), then it is recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* to pay the original purchase price.[5] Once they have paid *khums* on something, *khums* does not apply to that item or sum of money again (unless the owner changes).

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 41.
5 Āyatullāh Sīstānī, *Minhāj aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn*, Vol. 1 Ruling #1226.

Activity 4.2c: The Khums Calculator Graphic Organizer

In the graphic below, record five items that you own that may meet the criteria outlined above for obligatory *khums*. If you do not own five items that qualify for *khums*, then use your imagination to come up with the remaining examples of "savings" or "material possessions." Remember to confirm whether they meet the outlined criteria for savings or material possessions. Determine their monetary value and calculate the *khums* that would be owed on each item at the end of the year. In the large money bag, record the total *khums* (real or imaginary) that you owe for the year.



WHO DO I PAY MY KHUMS TO?

- *Khums* is the right and possession of the Imām of our time ﷺ, Imām al-Ḥujjah ﷺ, to use in the way that brings the most benefit to Islam. However, during his occultation, it is our obligation to deliver our *khums* to the general representative of the Imām ﷺ, who is our *marjaʿ*.
- It is also permissible to give our *khums* to someone, or an organization, who has permission from the *marjaʿ* to collect *khums* and utilize it in a specified manner. Usually this will be one of the trusted and qualified scholars in our Islamic centers or *masājid*. When it is time to pay our *khums*, if we have any concerns or questions, then we can approach a scholar, and ask them for instructions on how to fulfill our responsibility of paying *khums*.

HOW IS KHUMS USED?

Khums is divided into two parts:

1. The **first part** is called *Sahm as-Sādāt*. This is used to help people who are Sayyids—descendants of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Therefore, our *marājiʿ*, upon receiving khums will distribute it among Sayyids who are:
   - ▷ Orphans;
   - ▷ Poor people;
   - ▷ Individuals stranded in a strange land without any means of returning home.
2. The **second part** is called *Sahm al-Imām*. This is used for causes that would benefit Islam; it is specified by our *marjaʿ* in a way that the Imāms ﷺ would have used, or approved of the usage of *khums*. This includes things such as:
   - ▷ Helping other poor and needy believers around the world;
   - ▷ Funding or maintaining Islamic seminaries which keep the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ alive;
   - ▷ Assisting *ḥawzah* students who are studying to become Islamic scholars and leaders in the future, and will benefit different communities with their knowledge and experience;
   - ▷ Building and maintaining *masājid*, Islamic centers, and Islamic schools all around the world.

OTHER RULES RELATED TO KHUMS

QUESTION: Can I use my *khums* to help my local *masjid* or Islamic center?

ANSWER: In order to do this, you need the permission of your *marjaʿ*—who may give you permission to use a part of your *khums* for this. However, without the permission of your *marjaʿ*, this is not allowed.

QUESTION: Can I use my *khums* to help a poor person that I know, such as a relative or a member of the community?

ANSWER: In order to do this, you first need the permission of your *marjaʿ*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KHUMS

Giving part of our wealth for the sake of Allah ﷻ in general has strongly been emphasized in Islam. When we remove a part of our wealth regularly and give it to those in need, our wealth will grow more beautifully and productively. This is similar to cutting the branches of a tree or a bush to allow it to grow in a more beautiful and productive way.

There are several other benefits to giving charity, some of which are outlined in the narrations below:

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Verily, charity extinguishes the wrath of the Lord."*[6]

Imam ʿAlī ؑ said: *"Charity acts as a shield against the fire."*[7]

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"The Earth on the Day of Resurrection will be scorching, except for the shadow of a believer whose charity will serve as a shade for them."*[8]

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Give charity, and cure your sick ones through the giving of charity, for verily charity repels accidents and illnesses, and is a source of increase in your life span and your good deeds."*[9]

When it comes to *khums* in particular, we have special narrations which urge the believers not to ignore this vital obligation.

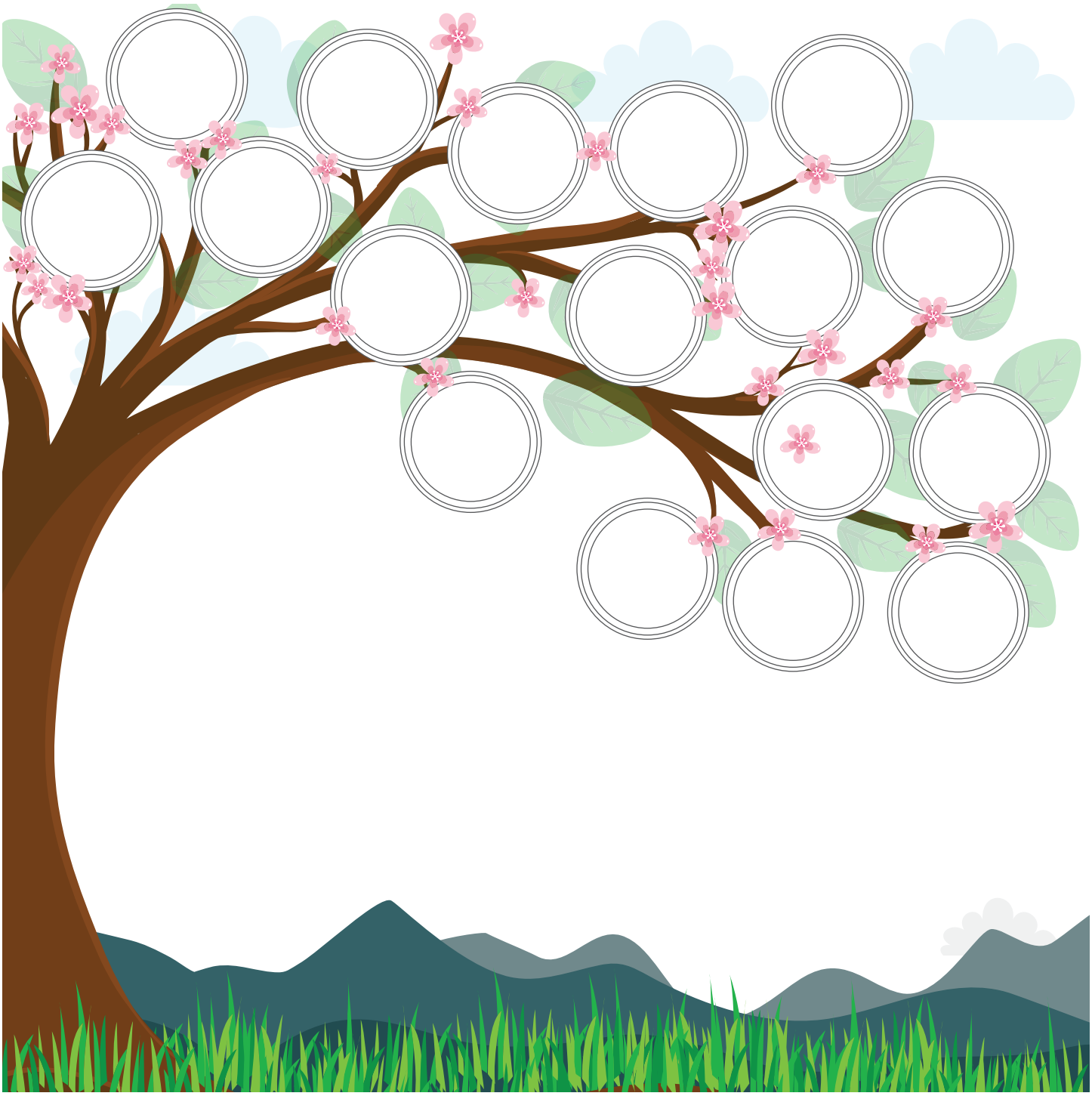
In fact, *khums* is the right of the representative of Allah ﷻ on Earth, and in reality belongs to Islam and the Muslim community. Therefore, if a person does not pay *khums*, they are keeping in their own possession wealth that does not really belong to them. This makes that wealth illegitimate, and anything that wealth is used for will consequently become illegitimate as well.

Therefore, in order to make sure that all of our wealth and possessions remain blessed and *ḥalāl*, and we do not get punished for keeping illegitimate wealth, we must make sure to fulfill the obligation of *khums* in a correct and timely manner.

6 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil,* Vol. 7, P. 158.
7 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 6, P. 258.
8 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 9, P. 369.
9 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh,* Vol. 2, P. 66.

Activity 4.2d: Grow Your Charity Tree

There are numerous examples and guidelines given in this lesson for how we can use our wealth to worship Allah ﷻ, and acquire His blessings. Imagine the tree graphic below is your very own Charity Tree, growing and blooming as a result of your charitable actions. Fill it in with as many good things you have been charitable with in the past, or how you intend to donate to virtuous causes as you grow older and earn more income. All types of charity—*wājib* and *mustaḥab*—can be included in your Charity Tree. Color the outlines of the bubbles you fill in with green, and see your tree prosper and bloom.



Activity 4.2e: Review Questions

1. *Khums* applies to:
   - **a.** The savings a person has at the end of one year on their *khums* date.
   - **b.** All of the money that a person earns during the year.
   - **c.** Cows, sheep, and camels.

2. *Zakātul Fiṭr* is payable:
   - **a.** On the eve of, or day of *Eidul Fiṭr*.
   - **b.** On the eve of, or day of *Eidul Aḍḥā*.
   - **c.** At the end of each year.

ZAKAH AND KHUMS

https://www.al-islam.org/kids-corner/zakah-and-khums

KHUMS EXPLAINED

https://www.al-islam.org/kids-corner/khums-explained

CHAPTER 5

Practical Fiqh

5.1 Ḥijāb and Modest Conduct

5.2 Rules of Food and Drink

5.3 Entertainment

5.1 Ḥijāb and Modest Conduct

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define *ḥijāb* as a literal and figurative "barrier" and identify its purpose.
- Explain how one's intention is an important factor in observing proper *ḥijāb* and modest conduct.
- List evidence from the Qurʾān and the traditions that describe and instruct the importance and obligation of *ḥijāb*.
- Outline the rules of *ḥijāb* and modest behavior for each gender.
- Explain what *zīnah* (adornment) is and how it relates to *ḥijāb*.
- Describe the rules in regards to our touching and looking at the opposite gender.

WHY DO MUSLIMS OBSERVE ḤIJĀB AND PRACTICE MODEST CONDUCT?

As Muslims, we believe that Allah ﷻ is All-Wise, and that His commands show us the best way to reach our perfection. The rules of Islam are set by Allah ﷻ for us so that we may achieve success in this world and the Hereafter. Ultimately, we observe *ḥijāb* and modest conduct because Allah ﷻ clearly commands us to do so.

Ḥijāb involves adhering to a certain dress code, but in its general sense it is more than just a dress code. *Ḥijāb* literally means 'barrier.' There is a lot of wisdom behind Allah's guidelines for us in this regard, some of which include the following:

- *Ḥijāb* and the Islamic guidelines regarding social conduct protect society from corruption.
- *Ḥijāb* and the Islamic guidelines in regards to modest conduct offer a way for men and women to interact in a safe environment on the basis of respect and dignity.
- The modest clothing that *ḥijāb* defines, the command to control one's glances, and the Islamic modest code of conduct *(ʿiffah)* creates a "barrier of modesty"—as opposed to allowing uncontrolled interaction between the genders.

In today's day and age—particularly when living in the west—*ḥijāb* has undoubtedly become a topic widely discussed. In this lesson, we will briefly address the philosophy of *ḥijāb* and modest conduct in general; and also provide some evidence to show its obligation as part of the religion of Islam.

Activity 5.1a: Build a Barrier of Modesty

The literal definition of *ḥijāb* is 'barrier,' and on a figurative level, the *ḥijāb* is also meant to build a safety barrier around the man or woman practicing it, and provide other Islamic guidelines for modest conduct. In addition, it helps barricade outside forces which may cause a person to act in an immodest manner.

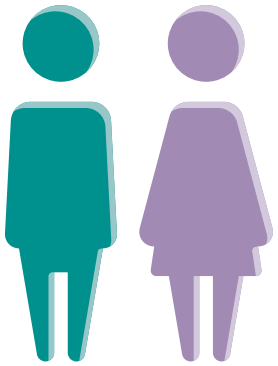
Using the graphic below, build the figure's 'Barrier of Modesty' by listing ways in which *ḥijāb* can preserve modesty or protect one from worldly aspects that may harm a person both physically and spiritually.

.....

Ḥijāb protects a person from…

.....

Ḥijāb preserves...



.....

Ḥijāb reminds us…

.....

Ḥijāb acts as a barrier against…

.....

THE INTENTION FOR ḤIJĀB

It is important to understand that similar to how our prayers and actions are accepted based on our intentions, so too our modest dress code and conduct will affect our spiritual growth depending on our intentions. *Ḥijāb* is a command of Allah ﷻ. Those who observe it act in obedience to the Creator who set this law in place for the betterment of society and humanity as a whole. *Ḥijāb* helps a woman see herself above the objectification that society has restricted women to, and reminds her of her true purpose and self-worth.

Men who support and positively encourage women who observe *ḥijāb*, and perform their own responsibilities toward having modest dress and conduct contribute towards building a pure society.

Ḥijāb that is worn and encouraged for the purposes mentioned (obedience to Allah ﷻ and making a better and purer society) leads to spectacular spiritual growth. Sometimes, *ḥijāb* can be worn for other reasons (such as purely to make a fashion statement), but that will not lead to the same result.

Activity 5.1b: My Intentions

Fill out the intention thought bubble for your gender:

GIRLS

- With what intention should I wear my *ḥijāb* every morning?
- Why should I be careful regarding the extent of interactions that I have with the opposite gender?

BOYS

- With what intention should I conduct myself modestly in front of the opposite gender?
- Why should I be careful in terms of the extent of eye contact that I have with the opposite gender?

EVIDENCES FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF ḤIJĀB

The ultimate reason why a Muslim girl or woman wears *ḥijāb*, and why Muslims observe modest conduct is because it is the command of Allah ﷻ, and Muslims submit to His commands. We will mention some verses and traditions that exemplify Allah's orders on the topic of *ḥijāb* and overall modest behavior.

VERSES OF THE QUR'ĀN

In the Noble Qur'ān, Allah ﷻ commanded the Prophet ﷺ: *"Say to the believing men that they should cast down their glances, and guard their private parts (by being chaste). That is better for them."*[1]

This is a command to Muslim men that they should not look immodestly, and in order to prevent any possibility of temptation, they are required to cast away their glances from provocative scenes.

In the next verse, Allah ﷻ commanded the Prophet ﷺ to address the women: *"Say to the believing women that they should cast down their glances, and guard their private parts (by being chaste)..."*[2]

This is a similar command as that given to men in the previous verse regarding controlling one's glance. After this, the Qur'ān describes the dress code for women: *"...and not display their beauty except what is apparent, and they should place their khumūr over their chest..."*[3]

Khumūr is plural of *khimār*, which means 'the veil covering the head.' According to the commentators of the Qur'ān, the women of Medina in the pre-Islamic era used to put the *khumūr* over their head with the two ends tucked behind and tied at the back of the neck—and in this way, their ears and neck were exposed. By saying that: "Place their *khumūr* over their chest" Almighty Allah ﷻ was ordering the women to **(i)** wear a head covering, and **(ii)** not let the chest area be exposed by covering it with their scarf. *(Note: Jurists explain that it can be covered by some other clothing as well.)*

In the Qur'ān, Allah ﷻ also commands the final Messenger ﷺ that: *"O Prophet! Say to your wives, your daughters, and the women of the believers that they should let down upon themselves their Jalābīb."*[4]

Jalābīb is the plural of *Jilbāb* which means 'a loose outer garment.'

This means that the Islamic dress code for women does not only require covering the hair, but it also includes covering the body, and the shape of the body as well.

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Nūr (24), Verse 30.
2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Nūr (24), Verse 31.
3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Nūr (24), Verse 31.
4 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 59.

TRADITION

Al-Fuḍayl[5] says: *"I asked the Imām about a lady's forearms—are they considered among the adornments for which Allah says in the Qurʾān: 'And they should not expose their adornment except for their husbands?'" The 6th Imām ﷺ replied: "Yes, and whatever is covered under the head scarf is part of her adornment [and has to be covered], and whatever is above the wrists [is also from her adornment and has to be covered]."*[6]

ḤIJĀB: THE RULES AND LIMITS

Certain Terms and Definitions

ʿAWRAH: The private area in the front and the back (what is commonly referred to as "the private parts").

ʿURF: The "common view" of the people in that society.

RĪBAH: Feeling that you will fall into lust.

TAMYĪZ: Being able to tell the difference between good and bad.

MUKALLAFAH: A female who has reached the age of religious responsibility for her own actions *(taklīf)*, and has thus become mature under Islamic law *(bālighah)*.

MUMAYYIZ: A person who is able to tell the difference between good and bad.

Obligatory Precaution: If the *marjaʿ* you follow says that something is *iḥtiyāṭ wājib* which translates to obligatory precaution, then you can either act on that precaution of theirs, or choose the ruling of the next most knowledgeable *marjaʿ*.

RULES FOR MEN

- In front of other men and non-*maḥram* women:
  - ▷ Men must cover their *ʿawrah* (private parts).
- In front of non-*maḥram* women:
  - ▷ A man must also cover any other part of the body that, if uncovered, could lead to sinfulness, such as lustful glances and immodest interactions.
- Men are not allowed to shave their beard off. Therefore, a man must keep enough facial hair up to a point that it would be considered a beard in the common view. Some *marājiʿ* say that a full beard is obligatory, while others say that a goatee is sufficient (one should check the ruling of the *marjaʿ* they follow).
- Men are not allowed to wear jewelry or other things (e.g. watch) made from pure gold or which are mostly gold.

Men are not allowed to wear clothing that is made from silk (pure silk or mostly silk).

5 A companion of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.
6 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 20, P. 200.

CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

In Front of Other Women and Maḥram Men

The *ʿawrah* needs to be covered. In addition, any part that is provocative and could lead to sinfulness if uncovered must be covered.

In Front of Children

A *mukallafah* should cover up in front of a boy who is *mumayyiz*, and who has matured to the point where he could be attracted to girls. This is usually around the age of 7.

In Front of Men who are Not Maḥram

وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ
إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān: "And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze, and guard their private parts; and that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; and that they should draw their veils over their chests and not display their beauty…"[7]

- It is obligatory *(wājib)* for a woman to cover everything from non-*maḥram* men, with the exception of the face and the hands up to the wrist.
  - ▷ The clothes used must cover the attractive shape and contours of the body as well—thus, they should be loose-fitting; not see-through; and not attractive so as to arouse attention.
  - ▷ All of the hair must be covered.
  - ▷ Only the face and hands (from the wrist down) can remain uncovered.
- Feet have to be covered.
  - ▷ See-through socks are not permissible (unless the feet are then covered by shoes).
  - ▷ If no non-*maḥram* men are present during *ṣalah*, then a woman does not have to cover her feet, and her clothes also do not have to be loose-fitting. For example, she can wear pyjamas, or leggings for *ṣalah*, as long as they cover the skin and are not see-through. But if any non-*maḥram* men are present, then as part of the *ḥijāb*, she must cover her feet.

7 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Nūr (24), Verse 31.

Activity 5.1c: The Ḥijāb Infographic

Design an infographic poster (a visual image such as a chart, or a diagram used to represent information or data) that offers a visual interpretation of all of the rules of *ḥijāb* for women, and one that visually depicts the *ḥijāb* requirements for men. You may include both genders in one infographic poster or create a separate poster for each of them.

Imagine your poster as a reminder or guide for those who are not familiar with the rules and specifications of *ḥijāb*. Label each element, and clarify the guidelines around that particular aspect of *ḥijāb*.

ADORNMENT (ZĪNAH)

Ḥijāb for women also involves refraining from wearing or beautifying oneself with things that are attractive in front of non-*maḥrams*. Adornment—or *zīnah* as it is referred to in Arabic—are things which beautify the one who is adorned with them. For example, a sparkly golden necklace is meant to beautify its wearer and draw attention to them; or putting on makeup is meant to make a person look more attractive. This is *zīnah*. It is permissible to adorn oneself as such, as long as they are concealed from non-*maḥrams*, however it is not allowed to decorate oneself with these things in front of non-*maḥram* men.

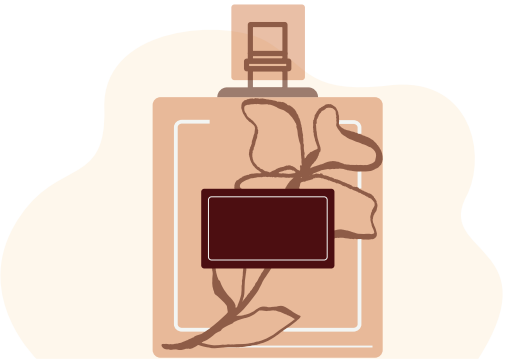
A *zīnah* is what is considered as *zīnah* in the *ʿurf* (common understanding of the people in a particular community). This could vary from place to place depending on what is common among the people in different areas.

- If it is considered *zīnah*, then it is not permissible to wear or display it in front of non-*maḥrams*. If you are not sure if it is considered *zīnah*, then it is okay to use, but you have to be honest with yourself.
- Some examples of things that are typically considered *zīnah* are: makeup, nail polish, nose rings, henna (mehndi), necklaces, colored contacts lenses, dresses worn at weddings, fancy pins on *ḥijābs*, etc.

What is okay?

- Jewelry that is hidden by one's clothing.
- Simple wedding bands.
- Trimmed eyebrows, or removal of facial hair, but not to the point that doing so would be considered a *zīnah*.
- According to the ruling of Āyatullah Sīstānī, rings and bracelets are okay, even if they are a *zīnah*, as long as wearing them would not typically attract negative, lustful attention. Also according to his ruling, shaped or colored eyebrows are allowed as long as one is safe from falling into *ḥarām*, and it is not done with the intention of attracting negative, lustful attention.

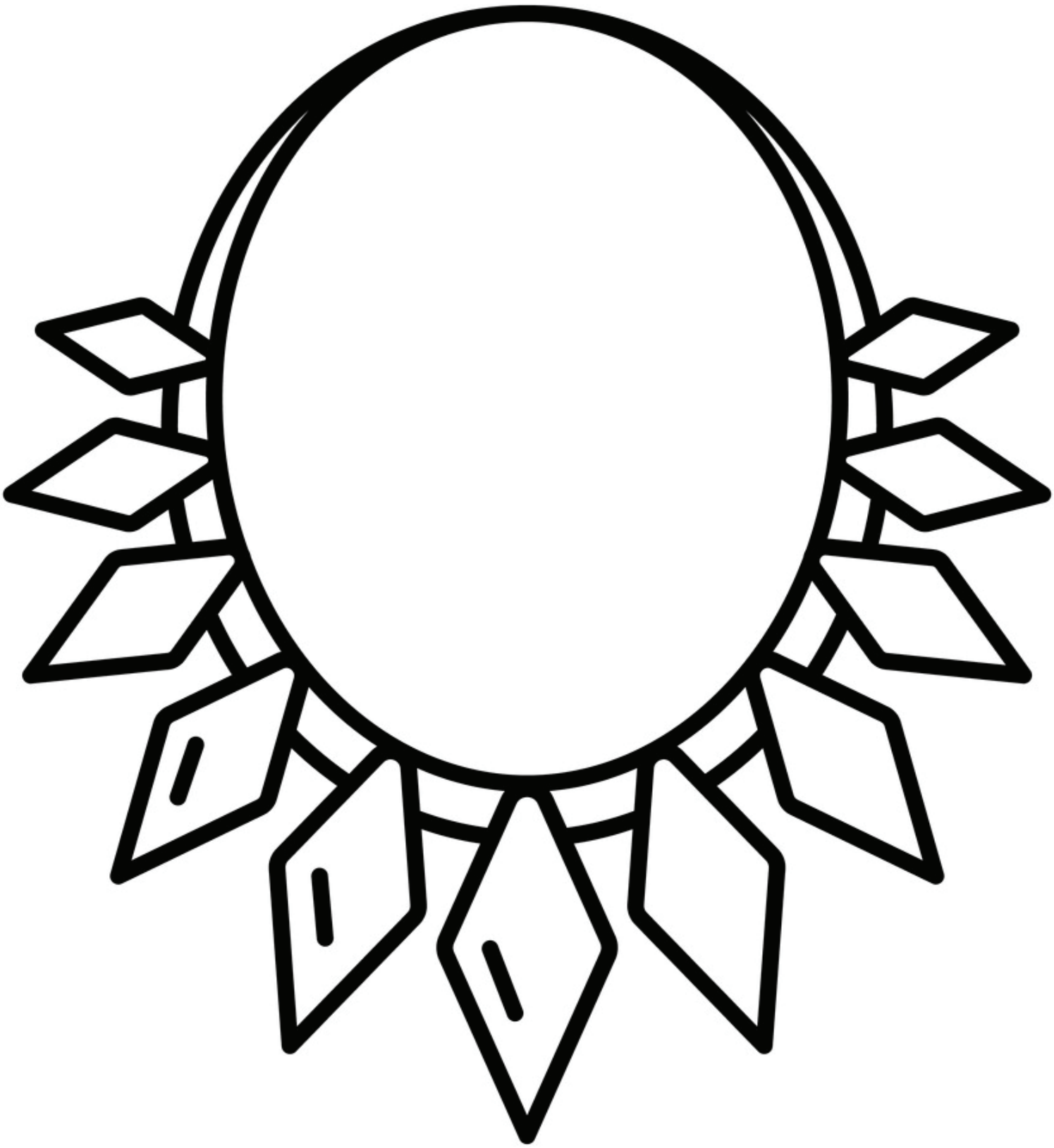
Perfume



- Not allowed:
  - ▷ If it is worn for the purpose of attracting negative, lustful attention.
  - ▷ Āyatullāh Sīstānī: If that much of it is put on to make the scent strong enough to typically attract negative, lustful attention (then it is not allowed).
  - ▷ Āyatullāh Khamenei: If that much of it is put on to make the scent strong enough to typically allow non-*maḥram* men to notice it (then it is not allowed.
- What then is okay?
  - ▷ A slight amount that is worn out of a good intention (to smell pleasant).

Activity 5.1d: The Zīnah Necklace

Using the graphic organizer below, fill each jewel in the necklace with a form of adornment that should not be worn in front of non-*maḥram*.



RULES OF LOOKING

In Islam, it is forbidden to look at the opposite gender with a lustful intention. Lust means 'inappropriate sexual attraction.' This applies to both men and women, and the Noble Qurʾān specifically covers this issue for both genders. The verses were referred to in the above section.

It is narrated from Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ that:

> "An evil glance is one of the poisonous arrows of Shayṭān. Many of these glances become a cause of prolonged grief."[8]

It is important to note that looking at the face and hands of a person of the opposite gender who is dressed decently without any lustful intention is not forbidden *(ḥarām)*. However, to look at them with a lustful intention, or if there is fear of falling into sin in the future *(rībah)*, then this is a sin and can lead to many harmful effects for a person. Therefore, when we are in an environment where there are members of the opposite gender, we need to be extra careful about our looks, we should avoid staring, and make sure that we are not looking at others with a bad intention.

The rules of looking at photographs and/or videos of non-*maḥrams* are similar to looking when in person or live; but if you do not know the person, and if there is no lust involved and no *rībah*, then it is permissible for a woman's hair to be uncovered. For example, if you work somewhere where you have to print pictures for people, you can do so even if their hair is uncovered. Or, if someone searches your phone at the border and you have pictures of your *maḥrams* without *ḥijāb* and the border officers do not know the people in the pictures, then it will not be a sin.

QUESTION: Is it permissible to see pictures of women who are now *bāligh* from the time before they were *bāligh*?

Āyatullāh Sīstānī: If it is close to what they look like now, then according to obligatory precaution, it is not permissible, otherwise it is okay as long as it will not lead to sinfulness.

Āyatullāh Khamenei: It is permissible as long as it will not lead to sinfulness.

RULES OF TOUCHING

Men and women who are non-*maḥram* are not allowed to have any physical contact at all. Therefore, shaking hands or giving a 'high-five' to someone of the opposite gender is not allowed. Playing sports with the opposite gender, if it involves physical contact, compromising the *ḥijāb*, or can lead to sin, is not allowed.

MODEST CONDUCT

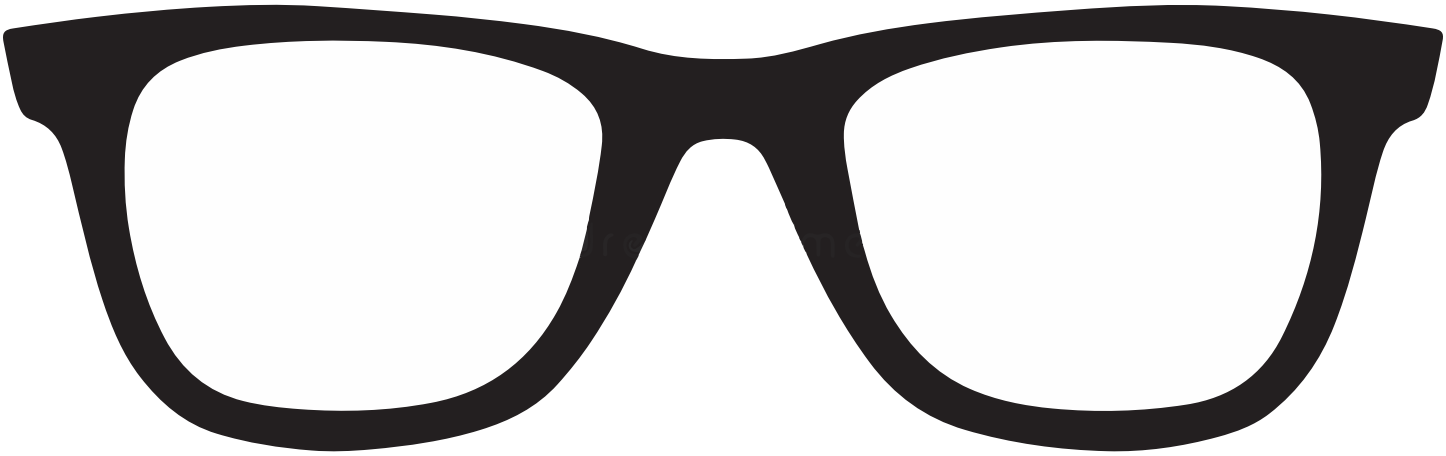
We should remember that Islamic guidelines for social conduct extend beyond dress code. It also includes the way we act, speak, present ourselves, and interact with the opposite gender. This includes in person or online. Modesty in the inner morality is what gives meaning to the external dress code.

8 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 20, P. 190.

Activity 5.1e: Look Vs. Don’t Look

In the graphic below, one side of the image has been allocated to things that are permissible to look at, while the other side is for things that are not permissible to look at. Using the guidelines provided above, brainstorm things that you encounter on a regular basis that might fit in either the ‘look’ or ‘don’t look’ categories.

LOOK **DON’T LOOK**



5.2 Rules of Food and Drink

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the rules of eating and drinking in Islam.
- Learn how to ensure that one's food is *ḥalāl* even when eating out.
- Be able to apply Islamic rulings to determine whether food is *ḥarām* and/or also *najis*.

Allah, the All-Merciful, made the natural world, including the animals, fruits, and vegetables subservient to us in order to make our life enjoyable and comfortable. One of the greatest blessings that He has given us are the incredible variety of foods available for us. However, part of this blessing is that Allah ﷻ has set certain rules and laws for us when it comes to what we can and cannot consume. Not everything that exists in nature is meant or allowed to be consumed by human beings. A small portion of these things are harmful to humankind—spiritually or physically—thus they must be avoided. In this lesson, we will review the rules, and some of the items that we are allowed to eat and drink, and what we must avoid.

Activity 5.2a: Pre-Reading Reflection

1. Aside from spoiled food, have you ever eaten or drunk something that did not make you feel good physically? What was it?

2. What are some foods or snacks that your parents ask you to limit or avoid because they might not be the healthiest choices for your body?

3. Have you ever wondered how what you eat can impact you spiritually? Explain.

RULES OF FOOD AND DRINK

ḤALĀL: Foods which are permissible and allowed to eat.

ḤARĀM: Foods which are not permissible, thus are not allowed to eat and must be avoided. It is a sin to consume these foods.

Activity 5.2b: Ḥalāl Foods and Ḥarām Foods Review

Place the following list of foods into the ḥalāl or ḥarām columns below.

- Cow
- Dog
- Cat
- Snake
- Goat
- Sheep
- Elephant
- Monkey
- Camel
- Gazelle
- Pig
- Kangaroo
- Chicken
- Emu
- Turkey
- Deer
- Zebra

ḤALĀL	ḤARĀM

COMMON HALAL AND NON-HALAL SEA FOODS

https://shorturl.at/ghsMN

Activity 5.2c: Seafood Categories

Refer to the following link and the lesson in Grade 7, in order to place the following categories of seafoods into the correct column:

- Fish that have scales
- Shark
- Crab
- Shrimp
- Prawn
- Fish that do not have scales
- Lobster
- Oyster
- Calamari/squid
- Octopus
- Eel
- Tuna

ḤALĀL	ḤARĀM

What is the general rule to determine if a type of seafood is *ḥarām* or *ḥalāl*?

STOP AND REFLECT: Are there any general rules that you can identify for what foods are *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām* based on your above classifications?

Besides being among the *ḥalāl* animals for consumption, what else needs to happen in order for Muslims to be able to eat the meat of that animal?

BIRDS

ḤALĀL

The following birds are permissible *(ḥalāl)* to hunt and eat:

- Birds which flap more than they glide and do not have talons (claws), as long as they can fly *(e.g. not baby birds)*
- This includes chickens, ducks, and similar birds

MAKRŪH

The following birds are reprehensible *(makrūh)* to hunt:

- Swallows
- Hoopoe birds

ḤARĀM

The following birds are not allowed *(ḥarām)* to eat:

- Birds which have talons (claws)
- Birds who glide more than they flap
- A bird that cannot fly away, such as a baby bird

Activity 5.2d: Charting

Complete the following chart by putting the words in the word bank into the correct category. The first one is done for you as an example.

WORD BANK

Chickens	Ducks	Birds with talons	Birds who glide more than flap	Hoopoes	Quails	Baby birds	Swallows	Turkeys

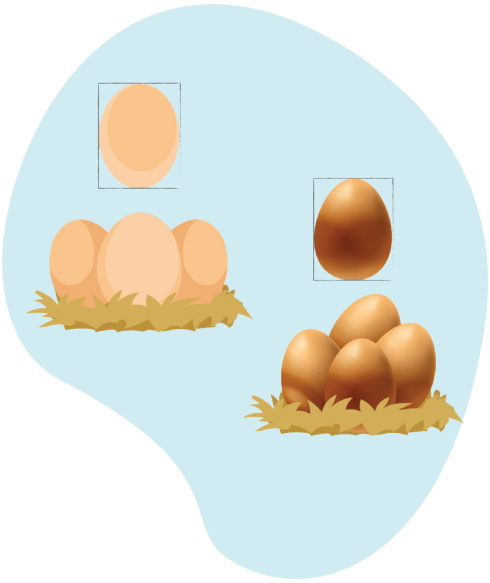
BIRDS THAT ARE ALLOWED TO HUNT AND ARE ḤALĀL TO EAT	BIRDS THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HUNT AND ARE ḤARĀM TO EAT	BIRDS THAT ARE MAKRŪH TO HUNT AND EAT
Chickens		

1. What are three examples of birds that have talons, thus are not permissible to eat? (You may need to do some research based on the criteria provided.)

2. What are five examples of types of birds that meet the criteria mentioned above making them permissible to consume?

3. Read Ruling #2641 on Āyatullāh Sīstānī's website. How can you determine if a bird is permissible to eat without knowing how it flies?

In the Grade 7 lesson, you learned about which birds are *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* to eat. In this lesson, we will further explore this topic by learning about the permissibility of eating other flying creatures, as well as animal eggs.



OTHER FLYING ANIMALS AND INSECTS

Flying animals and insects that have no feathers (such as bats and bees) are not permissible *(ḥarām)* to eat. The only exception to this rule is locusts. But in order for a locust to be *ḥalāl* to consume, it must be captured while it is alive.

ANIMAL EGGS

A *ḥarām* animal's egg is *ḥarām*, and a *ḥalāl* animal's egg is *ḥalāl*. If we do not know the source of the egg, then we can look at its shape—if it is asymmetrical, where the two ends are of different sizes—like chicken eggs—then it is *ḥalāl* to eat. But if the two ends are the same size, then it is *ḥarām* to eat.

BENEFITS OF THE METHOD OF ISLAMIC SLAUGHTER

There are specific rules in Islam for how an animal should be slaughtered. The method of *ḥalāl* slaughter is:

- More merciful to the animal because it leads to a quicker and less painful death.
- It is healthier because it allows more of the blood in the animal's body to come out when it is slaughtered. It reduces the amount of left-over blood, which if consumed can be harmful to human beings.

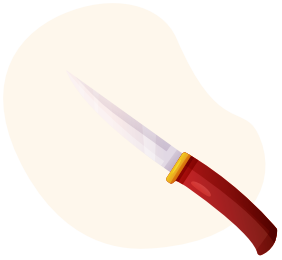
Activity 5.2e: Rules of Islamic Slaughter Review

In previous years, we learned the rules of Islamic slaughter. List as many of the conditions that you can think of for Islamic slaughter.

Activity 5.2e: Answer Key

CONDITIONS OF SLAUGHTERING

- The slaughterer must be a Muslim (male or female).
- According to certain *marāji'*, the knife used to slaughter the animal must be made of iron if iron is available.
- The throat, chest, and stomach of the animal to be slaughtered must be facing *qiblah*.
- The slaughterer must mention a remembrance containing the name of Allah ﷻ, so if the person says "Bismillāh" or "Allāhu Akbar" before slaughtering, then this is sufficient. The person doing the slaughtering must mention the name of Allah ﷻ themself.
- The four structures in the throat must be cut: the esophagus, the trachea, and the two major blood vessels. Therefore, the cut must be made under the Adam's apple. The whole head should not be cut off entirely until the animal is completely dead.
- After the animal is slaughtered, it should still have some motion (e.g. flap/blink). This helps the blood circulate out of the body.
- A "normal" amount of blood should come out of the body of the animal after it is slaughtered.
    - ▷ In certain countries, stunning the animals with an electric shock or by some other means before slaughtering it is common. As long as the animal does not die due to this stunning, then this is permissible. If the animal dies before being slaughtered due to this stunning, then it is not permissible to eat it.



EATING OUT: PRESENTATION AND ACTIVITY

When we are at home, our parents usually do the cooking, and they buy *ḥalāl* meat from the butcher so we do not have to worry about anything. However, when we are eating out, or shopping for food products, there are a number of things we should keep in mind when choosing items to consume. We will go through the following presentation and look at some scenarios that may come up when we are purchasing food. For each scenario, try to refer to the rules in this lesson (including the section below) to answer the questions before moving on to the slide with the answers.

Food Standards

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1J7I2_IZRosUctN1DvE6fSUnUclEFMTxylmYs2vPSYFo/edit#slide=id.gc6f90357f_0_0

EATING OUT: SOME RULES TO REMEMBER

- If what we are eating does not contain obvious meat products, then we can assume it is *ḥalāl* and we do not need to investigate further. The only exception is where there is reason to believe that they are lying, in which case according to some *marājiʿ*, we have to investigate further.
- If what we are eating does contain obvious meat products, then we must reach reasonable certainty that the meat is *ḥalāl*. We may reach this reasonable certainty in one of the following ways:
  - ▷ The owner is a trustworthy Muslim who says that the meat is *ḥalāl*, or
  - ▷ The shop has *ḥalāl* certification from a trustworthy Muslim organization.

In addition to the above rules, we must also remember that it is *ḥarām* to eat anything which has become *najis*. Sometimes, a type of food is *ḥalāl* to eat in itself, but becomes *najis* due to external reasons, and due to this becomes impermissible to eat. Here are some situations where food may become *najis*.

Pig products

Eating pork, ham, or other pig products is of course not permissible—*ḥarām*. But sometimes, there are places which sell *ḥalāl* food, but they also sell pork. Since pork is *najis*, food cooked using the same utensils as those used for pork or ham also become *najis*. If we are in doubt about whether there has been any contact with the pig products or not, then the rule is that we can assume that there has not been any contact. However, it is better to take precaution, and not buy food from places which also sell products made from pigs.

Alcohol

As we know, alcohol is *ḥarām* to consume. Wine and beer are also *najis*. If food comes into contact with beer or wine, then the food becomes *najis* and impermissible *(ḥarām)* to eat.

- A common example of this is "beer batter" which is sometimes used to coat food like fish filets. Due to the fact that this fish has come into contact with beer, it is not permissible to eat.
- Another common issue related to this is "vanilla extract" or "ethanol."
  - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī: vanilla extract is permissible to eat because it is not wine or beer, and it is not intoxicating, as long as the concentration of ethanol in the food is less than 2%.
  - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Khamenei: this is not *najis*, thus it is permissible to consume, unless we become certain that this type of alcohol was originally intoxicating and in liquid form.

Non-ḥalāl meat

If we go to a take-away food outlet which sells both *ḥalāl* and non-*ḥalāl* meat, we must be careful that the *ḥalāl* food does not become *najis*. Meat that is not *ḥalāl* (from an animal which is not slaughtered Islamically) is *najis* (except seafood). So, if the *ḥarām* meat is cooked in the same place where the *ḥalāl* meat is prepared, then the food could become *najis*, making it *ḥarām* to eat. Again, if we are not sure if the food we are buying has become *najis* or not, then we can still eat it, but it is always better to take precaution.

Disbeliever

Food becomes *najis* (Āyatullāh Sīstānī: according to *iḥtiyāṭ wājib*) if a *kāfir* (non-*ahlul kitāb kāfir*—a disbeliever who is not a Jew or Christian) touches the food while their hand is wet, or if the food itself is a liquid or liquid-like substance and they make skin contact with it. If we are not sure whether the food has been touched by such a person with their bare hands or not, then we can assume that it is okay to eat.

Activity 5.2f: Identifying Ḥalāl, Ḥarām, and Najis

Identify whether the foods in the table below are *ḥalāl*, *ḥarām*, or *najis*. You may check off more than one column if needed. When you are done, check your answers with a partner using the answer key provided.

FOOD	ḤALĀL	ḤARĀM	NAJIS
Meat of an animal that was slaughtered Islamically			
Meat of an animal that was not slaughtered Islamically			
Pig and pig products			
Beer and wine			
Seafood that follows the Islamic criteria			
Seafood that does not follow the Islamic criteria			
Vegetables that have been touched by a disbeliever with gloves			
Wet food that has been in direct contact with a disbeliever			

Activity 5.2f: Answer Key

IDENTIFYING ḤALĀL, ḤARĀM, AND NAJIS

FOOD	ḤALĀL	ḤARĀM	NAJIS
Meat of an animal that was slaughtered Islamically	✓		
Meat of an animal that was not slaughtered Islamically		✓	✓
Pig and pig products		✓	✓
Beer and wine		✓	✓
Seafood that follows the Islamic criteria	✓		
Seafood that does not follow the Islamic criteria		✓	
Vegetables that have been touched by a disbeliever with gloves	✓		
Wet food that has been in direct contact with a disbeliever		✓	✓

Did any of the above situations about how food becomes *najis* surprise you? How might this impact a restaurant outing of yours?

Activity 5.2g: Real-life Scenarios

1. Your friend invites you to a new *ḥalāl* restaurant. You meet the Muslim owner but you are not sure where they source their meat from. Do you need to confirm whether the meat is *ḥalāl* or not?

2. There is a new taco food truck that is all full of hype. You cannot wait to try it! There is even a fish taco on their menu. Do you need to ask which type of fish it is to determine if it is *ḥalāl* and okay to eat?

3. Your friend from the *masjid* who you know only eats *ḥalāl* meat brings food over to your house for a study session. Do you need to confirm whether the food is *ḥalāl* or not?

4. You are in line at a Subway that is not *ḥalāl*, and you see the employees picking up chicken and steak with their gloves while making other subs. Do you need to ask them to change their gloves before they make your sandwich?

5. You just moved into a new neighborhood. Your Hindu neighbor brings you a vegetarian dish to welcome you to the neighborhood. Can you eat it?

Activity 5.2h: Review Worksheet

1. **True or False:** Any animal is considered *ḥalāl* if you say "Bismillāh" or "Allāhu Akbar" before eating it.

2. **True or False:** If a disbeliever came in contact with your food, but you can confirm that they were wearing clean gloves, then it is permissible to eat that food.

3. **True or False:** If your food comes into contact with seafood that is not considered *ḥalāl*, then your food becomes *najis*.

4. Meat from an animal that is not slaughtered Islamically is considered:

   a. *Ḥarām*
   b. *Makrūh* and *najis*
   c. *Ḥarām* and *najis*

5. You go to a restaurant that does not serve *ḥalāl* meat. Which of the following do you need to do:

   a. Ask about the ingredients of every dish on the menu, whether it has meat or not
   b. Order a vegetarian dish
   c. You cannot eat at this restaurant

6. Which of the following animals are not permissible to eat (you may circle more than one):

   a. Cow
   b. Dog
   c. Snake
   d. Chicken

7. The following types of fish are permissible to consume:

   a. Fish without scales
   b. Fish with scales
   c. All seafood is permissible

8. Why is vanilla extract, even though it is made with ethanol, considered permissible?

9. What are two ways in which you can reach reasonable certainty that the meat at a restaurant or butcher shop is *ḥalāl*?

10. What are two reasons why it is essential for animals to be slaughtered in the Islamic way in order for them to be *ḥalāl*?

BONUS: Write a review of your favorite *ḥalāl* restaurant in your area. Be sure to include:

- The location of it
- How you verified that it is *ḥalāl*
- Is it 100% *ḥalāl* or only partially
- Your favorite dish(es) to order and why

5.3 Entertainment

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify the Islamic recommendations for how to use our time in this world, as encompassing three important facets of life: conversing with our Lord, seeking livelihood, and engaging in pleasures that are *ḥalāl* and which can improve us.
- Briefly outline some entertainment activities that are permissible in Islam, such as biking, playing sports, exploring nature, and traveling.
- Identify the distractive quality of entertainment media, and the dangers that these activities pose to our mental, physical, and spiritual health.
- Review *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* forms of entertainment, and the criteria which distinguishes them.
- Outline some additional scenarios which can help clarify the forms of entertainment that are permissible from an Islamic perspective.

In our journey toward perfection and closeness to Allah ﷻ, one of the most important parts of our lives is to reflect on how we use our time. As we learned in previous years, Islam teaches us that we should make the most of our time in this world. According to a *ḥadīth*, our time should be split into three components:

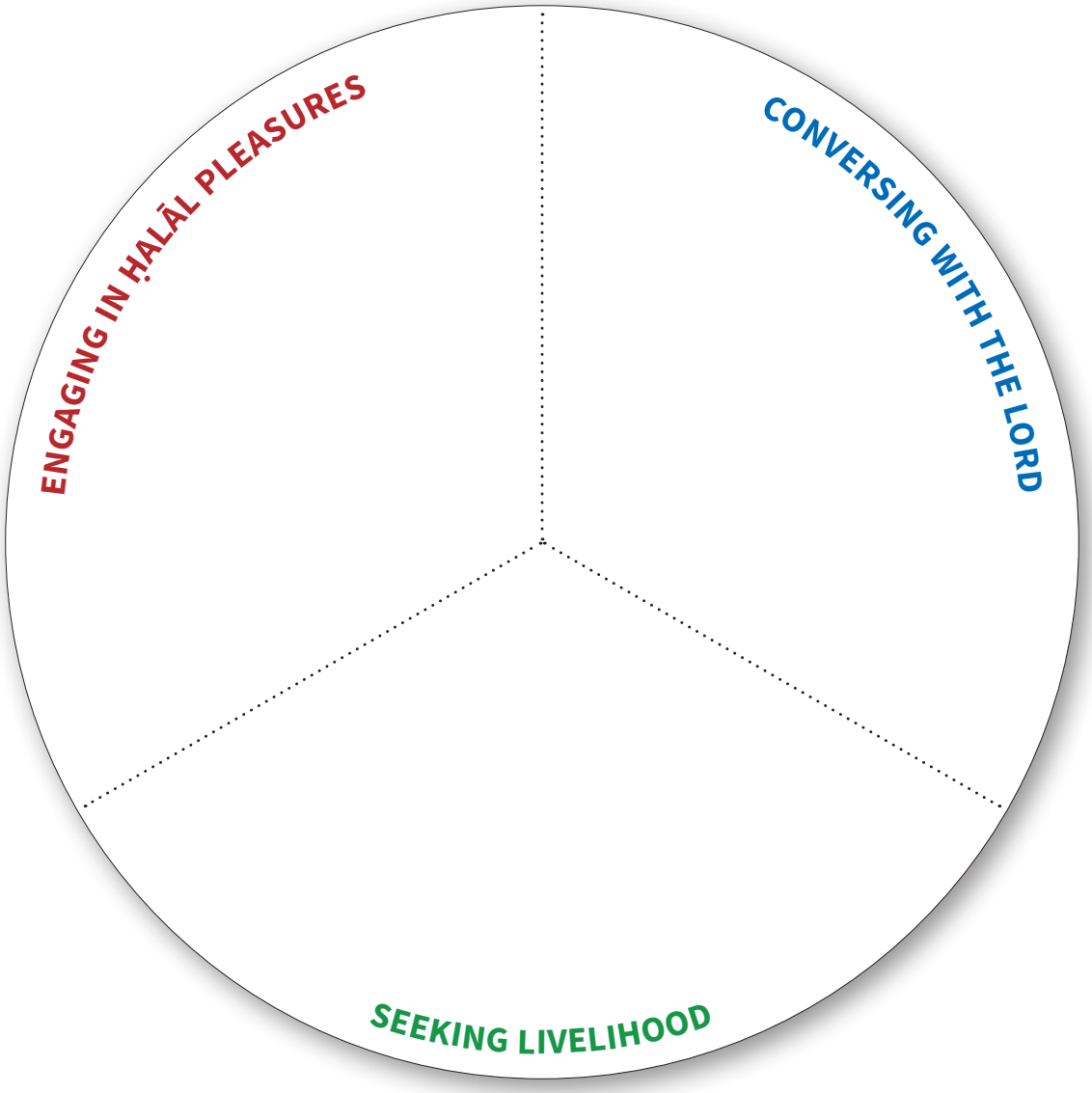
لِلْمُؤْمِنِ ثَلَاثُ سَاعَات: فَسَاعَةٌ يُنَاجِي فِيهَا رَبَّهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يَرُمُّ — مَعَاشَهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يُخَلِّي بَيْنَ نَفْسِهِ وَبَيْنَ لَذَّتِهَا فِيمَا يَحِلُّ وَيَجْمُلُ

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: "For a believer, there should be three portions of time: a portion in which they converse with their Lord; a portion in which they seek their livelihood; and a portion dedicated to their pleasures that are ḥalāl and which will beautify (improve) them."[1]

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Short Saying #378.

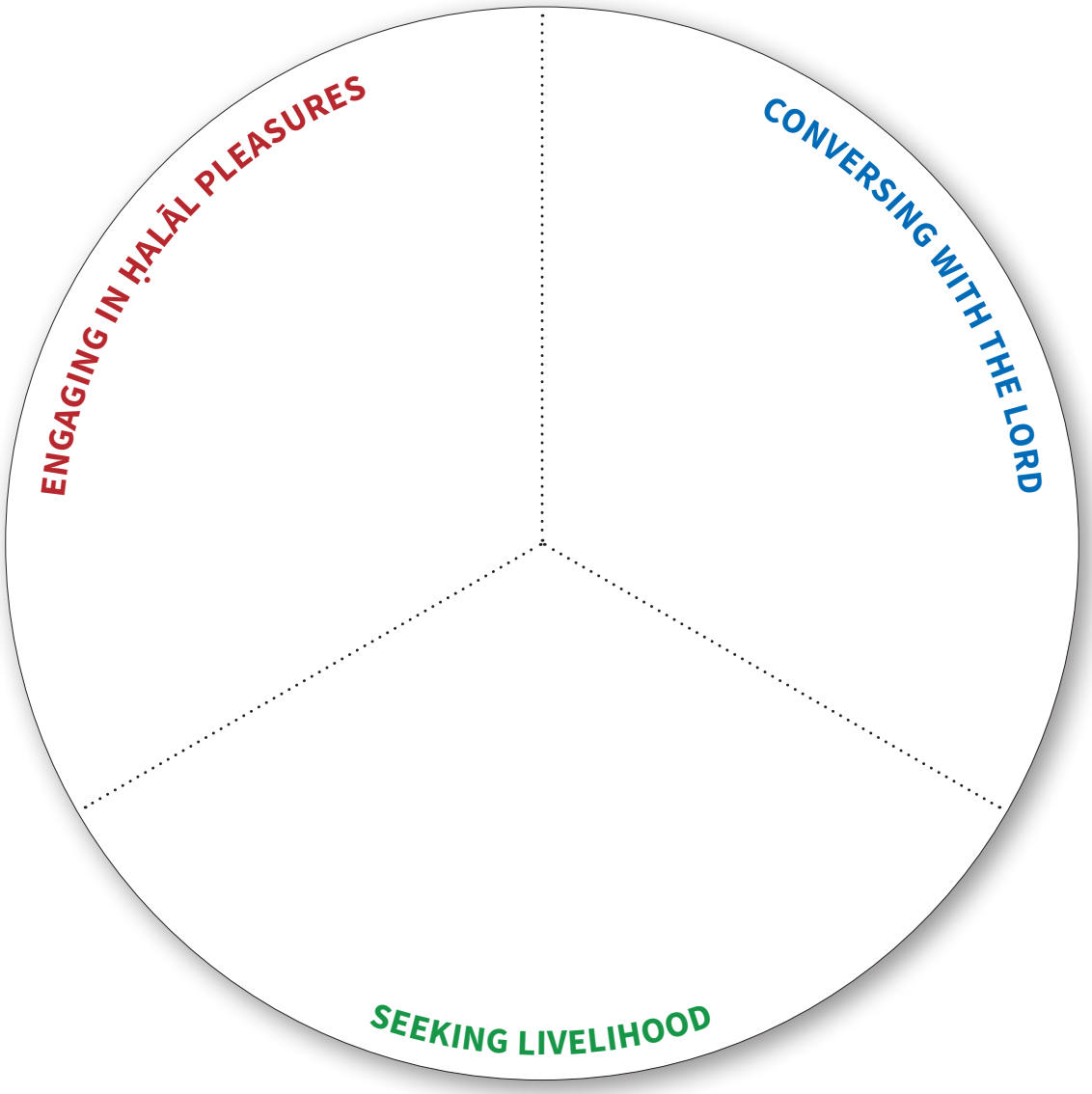
Activity 5.3a: A Slice of Your Time

1. As per the above narration, how much time (in hours) do you set aside for each of the three categories mentioned (conversing with the Lord, seeking livelihood [or becoming educated], and engaging in pleasures that are *ḥalāl* and which can improve us)? Record the designated times in the pie chart below.



2. Clearly, the Imām ﷺ is not telling us to give equal time to each of these areas. However, it is possible that some people are imbalanced because they are not giving enough time, or are giving too much time, to one or more of the areas. Is there an imbalance in the way that your time is divided? If so, then how?

3. In each slice of the pie chart, list some activities that you often take part in which fill each time portion.



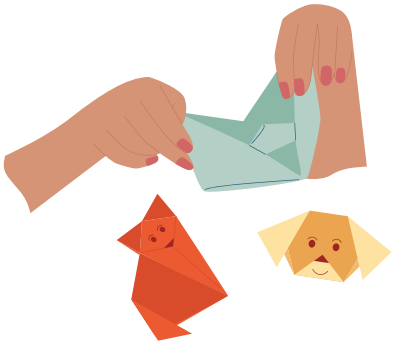
4. If there are imbalances in your time distribution, then what is one way in which you can achieve a better balance?

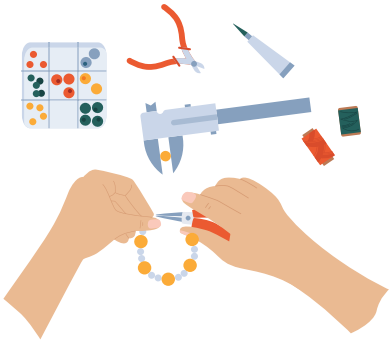
As we can see from the above *ḥadīth*, entertainment is a natural part of life. We all need some time to rest and recuperate so that we can continue engaging in other important activities throughout the day, such as worship and earning a livelihood. Many types of entertainment are permissible in Islam. Activities such as sports, being in nature, socializing with family and friends, and travel are all permissible in and of themselves.

However, there are some forms of entertainment that we need to be extra careful about. This is because in today's world, these types of entertainment are being misused, and can lead to many negative effects on us—both spiritually and psychologically. In this lesson, we will go through some presentations which will help us reflect on what themes and content are present in today's popular forms of media, and the importance of protecting ourselves from these negative messages.

This lesson also includes a table which reviews the rules related to music and entertainment in brief. It also contains some common scenarios we may come across in relation to these issues. You can refer to the Grade 7 lesson for more detailed rules on these things.

Some forms of entertainment are being misused, and can lead to many negative effects on us—both spiritually and psychologically.





Activity 5.3b: Testing your Attention

Without turning around, can you describe what the person sitting behind you is wearing? If you do not have anyone sitting behind you, then can you recall what one of your parents was wearing the last time you saw him/her this morning?

The Media (A Closer Look) Presentation

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_joJb0pfCCgATnN53Kug_RJXOxoCipSI_lMe3hDv4lE/edit?usp=sharing

Activity 5.3c: Media Presentation (After-Watching Activity)

BETTER HABITS GOAL SETTING: REDUCING DISTRACTIONS

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." –Aristotle

As the demonstration by Apollo Robbins and the remainder of The Media (A Closer Look) Presentation makes it clear, there are numerous distractions disguised as entertainment which not only take us away from a productive and healthy lifestyle, but actually pose a serious danger to our mental, physical, and spiritual health. Using the **Goal Setting Tracker** worksheet below, list some goals or ideas for reducing the distractions in your life. Then, turn your goals into healthy habits by tracking your progress with meeting your goals over the course of a month!

Goal Setting Tracker

Goals / Healthy Habits	Month:																													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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ḤALĀL AND ḤARĀM ENTERTAINMENT QUICK REFERENCE CHART

	ḤALĀL	ḤARĀM
Music (instruments/tune)	If not exclusively used for gatherings of sin.	If exclusively used for gatherings of sin such as in nightclubs, bars, dances, etc.
Songs (lyrics and type of singing tune)	If not suitable for gatherings of sin.	If the tune is suitable for gatherings of sin such as in nightclubs, bars, dances, etc. (even if the lyrics are decent). Contains lyrics which promote, encourage, or glorify ḥarām acts such as drug use, criminal behavior, or inappropriate sexual or romantic relationships (even if the tune is not suitable for gatherings of sin).
Dancing	Dancing is generally discouraged in Islam, and most forms of it (such as the type of dancing that takes place in *ḥarām* gatherings of entertainment) are prohibited. Also, if it occurs in a mixed gathering of males and females then it is definitely forbidden.	
Video Games	Permissible in moderation, and if it does not contain *ḥarām* scenes or inappropriate themes.	Not permissible if it contains *ḥarām* scenes or inappropriate themes, or if it involves listening to *ḥarām* music.
Movies and TV shows	Permissible in moderation, and if it does not contain *ḥarām* scenes or inappropriate themes.	Not permissible if it contains *ḥarām* scenes or inappropriate themes. It is not permissible to watch immoral scenes, even without the presence of lust, or fear of committing *ḥarām*.
Digital/ Social Media	Permissible in moderation, and if it does not contain any *ḥarām* scenes or inappropriate themes.	Not permissible if it contains *ḥarām* scenes or inappropriate themes. It is not permissible to engage in private social communication with members of the opposite gender, or even public communication which leads to lust, or fear of falling into any *ḥarām*.

Activity 5.3d: Distinguishing Ḥalāl and Ḥarām Entertainment

DIRECTIONS: Analyze the following scenarios distinguishing *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* forms of entertainment

1. My friends listen to songs that I know are definitely played in sinful gatherings such as nightclubs. They talk about these types of songs frequently, and I am tempted to listen to these songs so I can be a part of the conversations. What should I do?

2. My teacher is playing relaxing, soft music in the background of our class. It is not the type of music that would be played in sinful gatherings. Do I need to leave the classroom?

3. My friend sent me a link for a new song that just came out. The music is not usually the type to be played in sinful gatherings, but the lyrics are about inappropriate relationships. Can I listen to this song?

4. Asma is invited to a girls-only dance party. She knows that there will be no males there. However, it is very likely that *ḥarām* music and songs will be played, and it will turn into a sinful gathering. Can she attend this party?

5. Zahid loves playing video games. The new version of a particular game he usually plays now includes animated female characters who wear indecent clothing. The game now also has a theme of flirting, and inappropriate relations between male and female characters. He finds that playing the game now causes him to have inappropriate thoughts. Can he continue to play this game?

6. Asim enjoys playing RPGs (Role-Playing Games). His friend invites him to play a new game, but Asim notices that this game involves excessive violence and horror scenes. Should he play this game?

7. Samah installed a social media app on her phone. Recently she noticed that her feed includes a lot of inappropriate pictures which encourage indecent clothing and immoral actions. What should she do?

8. Sarah installed Instagram on her phone. A boy from school started sending her private messages on this app, and they are having one-on-one conversations now. What should she do?

9. Can you come up with one additional scenario that you have encountered in your personal life that raised questions for you about whether a certain activity was a *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām* form of entertainment? Are you able to resolve the question using the chart or scenarios above?

HISTORY & ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 1

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

1.1 Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

1.2 The Spread of Islam

1.1 Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

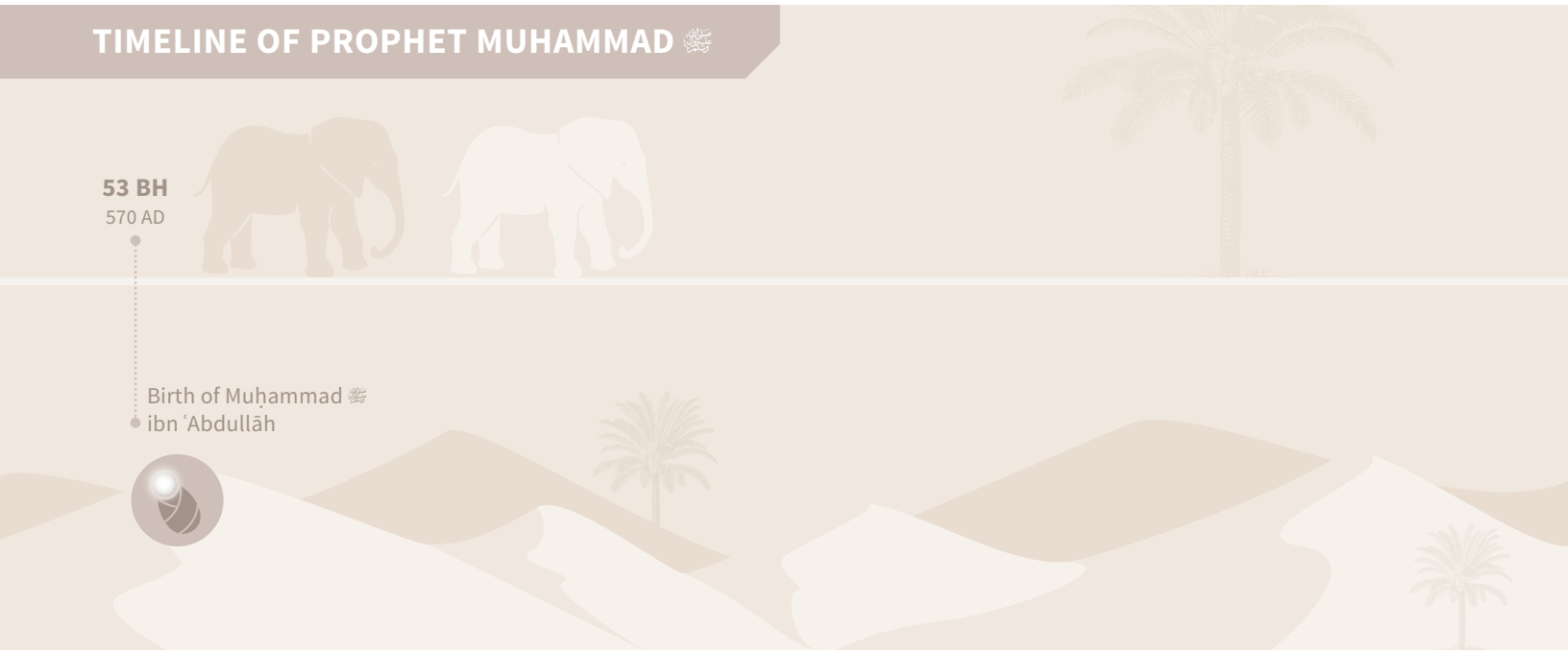
WE WILL:

- Explain the effects of the economic blockade on the small community of the Meccan Muslims at that time after Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ announced his Prophethood.
- Outline the patience that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ showed during various times of his life.
- Apply strategies to gain patience in our own lives during trying times.

AN OVERVIEW OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

Name	Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh ﷺ
Kunyah	Abul Qāsim (and some others)
Title	Khātam an-Nabiyyīn (Seal of the Messengers), Al-Muṣṭafā (the Chosen One)
Parents	Ḥaḍrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib and Lady Āminah bint Wahab
Date of Birth	17th Rabīʿal-Awwal 53 BH (570 AD), ʿĀmul-Fīl (Year of the Elephant)
Birthplace	Mecca, Arabia
Date of Death	28th Ṣafar 11 AH
Place of Death	Medina, Arabia
Lifespan	63 Years
Location of Shrine	Masjid an-Nabawī

TIMELINE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ



53 BH
570 AD

Birth of Muḥammad ﷺ ibn ʿAbdullāh

In earlier grades, we discussed the first revelation that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ received, then the general invitation that he made to his close family members, and then the Quraysh. We saw how the Quraysh tortured the Prophet ﷺ and his companions in order to make them turn away from Islam; however, the loyal companions persevered and continued to declare their faith in Islam and the Prophet ﷺ.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BLOCKADE

After several failed attempts to extinguish the light of Islam, the chiefs of Quraysh led by Abū Sufyān decided to inflict an economic and social blockade on the Prophet ﷺ and his followers in the 7th year after the advent of Islam. They imposed terms and conditions that every person belonging to the Quraysh and all of their allies had to follow. These conditions included a ban on:

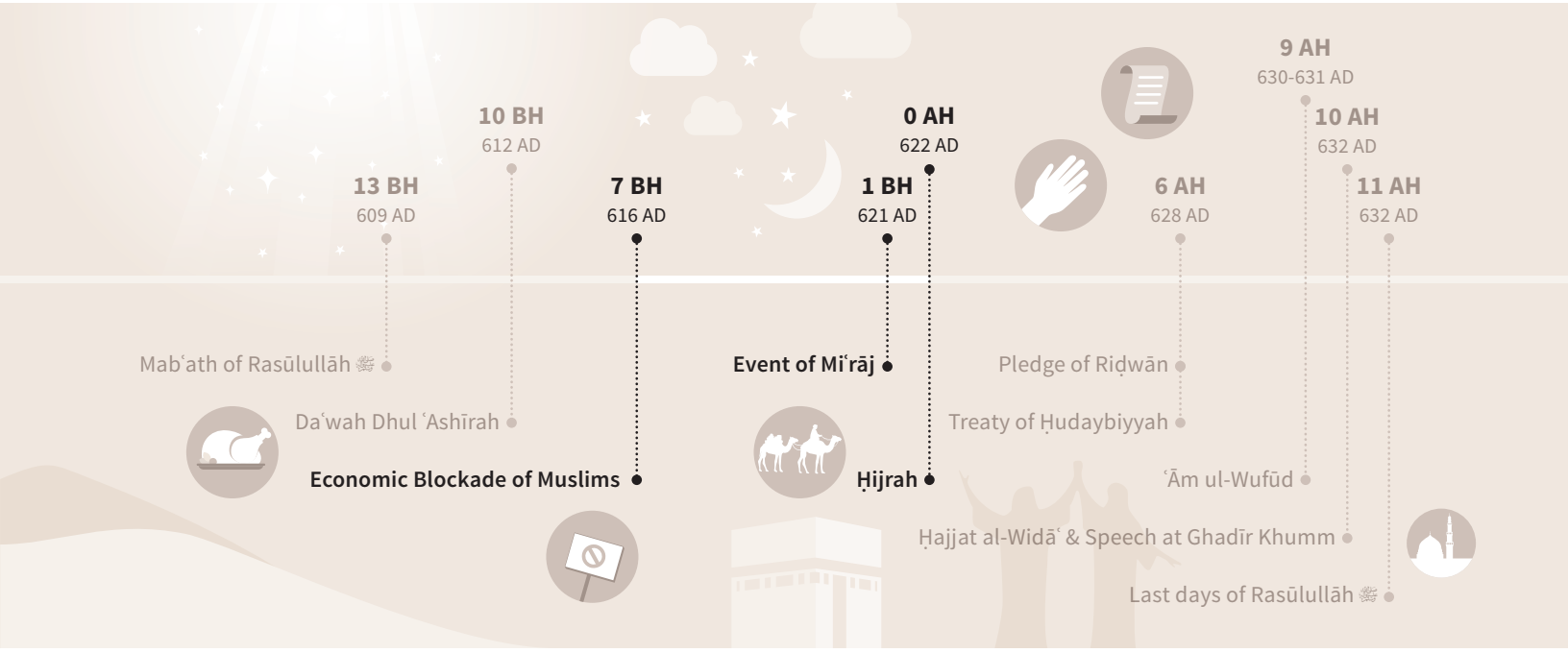
- Every sort of trade with the Prophet ﷺ and his supporters
- Any kind of association with the Prophet ﷺ and his supporters
- Marriage with anyone in the Muslim community

The Prophet ﷺ and his companions were exiled from Mecca and had to live in a valley known as the Valley of Abū Ṭālib which was located near al-Masjid al-Ḥarām—behind the Ṣafā and Marwā mountains. They were forced to set up small houses and tents in that region. The blockade lasted for three years and placed immense pressure on the Muslims. At times, the only thing they had to eat during the day was dates, and that too in such limited quantities that sometimes one date would have to be shared between two people.

However, even in such intense conditions, the Prophet ﷺ remained patient, calm, and composed, and he placed his full trust in Allah ﷻ at all times. Whenever he had an opportunity to preach, he did so. It was also during these three years that the wealth of Lady Khadījah ؓ served to keep the Muslims alive. She would purchase food at a high price on the black market, and then distribute it among the Muslims. She exhausted all of her wealth for the sake of Islam.

After three years of intense suffering, pressure built up against Abū Jahl and the other leaders who spearheaded this boycott. When the polytheists went to see the treaty they had agreed upon in the Kaʿbah, they noticed that it had all been miraculously eaten up by termites except for the phrase *"Bismika Allāhumma"* (In your Name, O Allah). Thus, the Muslims were then allowed to return to their homes, and trade with the Quraysh was restored. However, just after their return home, the Noble Prophet ﷺ lost his dear uncle Abū Ṭālib, and two months after that, his beloved wife Khadījah ؓ also passed away.[1] Even though the Prophet ﷺ lost two of his most beloved family members, he still showed patience and continued his responsibilities toward Allah ﷻ.

1 Maqrīzī, Aḥmad, *Al-Imta' al-Asma'*, Vol. 1, P. 45.



PATIENCE (ṢABR)

According to Imām ʿAlī ﷺ:

"Success will not be denied to the one who is patient, even though it (success) may take a long time to reach him." [2]

The truth of this can clearly be seen in the process of building Islam by the Prophet ﷺ and the early Muslims. Today Islam has reached all corners of the world, after a lot of hardship and suffering in the early days—had the Prophet ﷺ and early Muslims not been patient, Islam would not have survived over these generations.

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS PATIENCE (ṢABR)?

In the Islamic understanding, *ṣabr* means to deal with a difficult, hurtful, or painful situation in a reasonable manner without acting out of sheer emotion, and carrying out whatever duty is necessary despite the hardship. In this sense, the word "patience" is often used to describe *ṣabr* because a patient person thinks before reacting. But *ṣabr* does not always mean that someone should remain patient, calm, and unemotional, or that it is bad to get emotional. Emotions are natural and we should not feel bad about having them. Someone who has *ṣabr*, however, does not act just out of emotion, and instead will use their intellect and the teachings of Islam to understand what their responsibility is.

According to the Islamic teachings, *ṣabr* is needed during three occasions:

1. **While observing the obligatory things *(wājibāt)* of Allah ﷻ.**
   For example, when we have to wake up for *Fajr*, or fast during the long and hot days of summer, etc.
2. **In the face of disobedience toward the rules of Allah ﷻ.**
   For example, refraining ourselves from backbiting, or not eating impermissible food, etc.
3. **During times of trials and tribulations.**

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

How would you respond to the following statement? Do you agree or disagree? Why? *The economic and social blockade that the early Muslims faced was an occasion for them to demonstrate ṣabr in all three of these above-mentioned categories.*

2 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Short Saying #153; ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 68, P. 95.

WAYS TO ACHIEVE PATIENCE

Āyatullāh Khomeini talks about a useful strategy for achieving patience in his book, *Forty Ḥadīth*:

> *During times of hardships, turn your heart's attention toward Allah, and you will witness its effects in this world itself, and your heart will attain such an expanse that it will witness the Power of Allah. Richness and contentment will then spread throughout your heart…If you have faith in Allah and believe that all of the affairs lie (solely) in His Mighty Hands, then you will not complain before the Almighty about the hardships of life and the adversities that strike you. Rather, you will accept them willingly, fulfill your duties, and thank Him gratefully for His bounties.* [3]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Can you think of a specific time when you had to observe *ṣabr* in your life? Which of the three categories of *ṣabr* does this event fall into?

Reflect on your own behavior during that circumstance. Write down some ways you could have improved your attitude, and share these strategies so that you can better yourself in the future if similar situations arise.

When it becomes extremely difficult to bear the hardships in life, *ṣabr* can lead to great rewards from Allah ﷻ. During these times, we must be especially aware of our actions, and know what our responsibilities are. It is extremely important to know our *wājibāt* (the obligatory actions that we must perform), and the *muḥarrimāt* (those things that we must refrain from) in order to be able to act in a way that shows *ṣabr*.

3 Āyatullāh Khomeini, *Forty Ḥadīth,* Ch. 16.

PATIENCE OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

It was time for *ifṭār* (breaking of the fast), and Anas ibn Mālik, one of the Prophet's servants, put a bowl of milk in the room and covered it with a piece of cloth, so that the Prophet ﷺ could open his fast. He had prepared milk for the Prophet ﷺ to break his fast like previous days. Anas was starving and was waiting for the Prophet ﷺ to come so that they could break their fast together. However, the Prophet did not return home for a long time. He thought to himself: *The Prophet must have been invited by someone [to eat with them].*

Seeing that the Prophet ﷺ was still not home, Anas drank all of the milk. In the meantime, the Prophet ﷺ came back home with some of his friends.

Anas asked one of them: "Has the Prophet broken his fast?"

They replied: "No, he has not."

Anas felt really ashamed and thought to himself: *What did I do? The Prophet was fasting today, and now he must be starving. If he learns that I ate his food, he may become sad, or even angry.*

When the Prophet ﷺ found out that Anas had not left any food for him, he treated him as if nothing had happened. The Prophet ﷺ went to bed hungry that night, and never brought up the issue with Anas after that.[4] Anas ibn Mālik felt really ashamed, but realized that the Prophet ﷺ had a great amount of patience.

The primary goal of the Prophet ﷺ was to raise the level of moral conduct amongst the people. Hence, it was necessary that he himself be the epitome of such behavior.

In a lengthy narration quoted in the book, *Sunan an-Nabī*, Imām ʿAlī ؑ narrates aspects of the conduct of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Imām Ḥusayn ؑ. Below are some parts of this narration:

- The Prophet ﷺ would remain silent except when it was necessary for him to speak, and he would be friendly with people and would not alienate them.[5]
- He would be very careful with people, and be cautious not to be impolite or turn away from them, frowning. He would seek to know about the condition of his companions, and would ask people about the condition of others (like their relatives or neighbors).[6]
- He was always cheerful, easygoing, approachable, and soft-spoken. He was never rude or harsh. He never laughed loudly, never uttered obscenities, never looked for faults in people, and never flattered anyone.[7]

4 Ṭabarsi, Ibn al-Faḍl, *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, Vol. 1, P. 78; *250 Year Old Person*, Āyatullah Khamenei.
5 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Maʿānī al-Akhbār*, P. 83; Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, Vol. 1, P. 246; Ibn Kathīr, *As-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 601.
6 Daylāmī, Ḥasan, *Irshād al-Qulūb*, P. 115.
7 *Irshād al-Qulūb*, P. 115.

MIʿRĀJ (THE HEAVENLY ASCENSION)

The Prophet ﷺ achieved the most lofty spiritual station by personifying qualities such as *ṣabr*. This led to a unique achievement for him—the Heavenly Ascension (known in Arabic as the *Miʿrāj)*.

Miʿrāj was a special distinction given to the Noble Prophet ﷺ by Allah ﷻ. It shows us his status compared to all other human beings. This physical journey of the Prophet ﷺ began from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā in Quds, then to an unspecified spiritual realm where he witnessed the Heavens and Hell, and several other realities.

The Qurʾān refers to *Miʿrāj* as follows:

Exalted is He who took His servant [Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ] on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (al-Masjid al-Ḥarām) to the Farthest Mosque (al-Masjid al-Aqṣā) whose surroundings We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. [8]

From al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, he then proceeded up to the skies where he observed the stars and the systems of the world. In the Heavens, he conversed with the souls of the previous Prophets ﷺ, and the angels there. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ also saw Heaven and Hell.

According to a *ḥadīth,*[9] when the Prophet ﷺ returned back to Mecca, the Quraysh questioned him about this journey, not believing that all of this could occur in one night.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ not only described the layout of al-Masjid al-Aqṣā and details of certain things that he had seen there, but in order to prove that he had actually gone to al-Quds, he told them about the people he had met in his travel between al-Masjid al-Aqṣā and Mecca.

The Prophet ﷺ met a caravan who had lost their camel, and he asked them to give him some water from which he drank. It was not long afterward that the travelers of that caravan reached Mecca, and reported the events that had occurred.[10]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why would the Quraysh ask specific questions to the Prophet about the *Miʿrāj*, especially since they were not Muslims?

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 1.
9 *Irshād al-Qulūb*, Vol. 1, P. 199.
10 Ayatullah Subhānī, *Forūq Abadiyat*, Vol.1, Pp. 379-381.

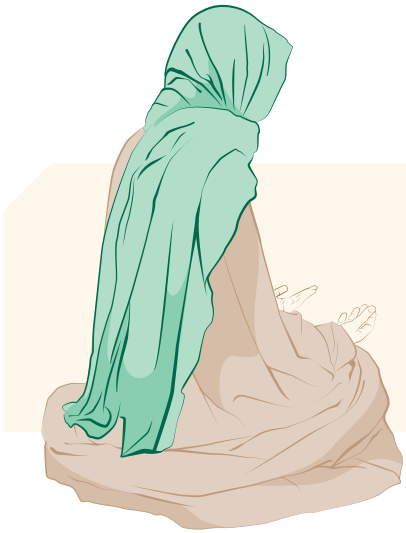
A person asked Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ: "Is there a particular place [reserved] for Allah?"

The 4th Imām ﷺ replied: "No."

The man said: "Then why did Allah make his Noble Prophet Muḥammad journey through the skies?"

Imām as-Sajjad ﷺ replied: "He made him ascend so that he might become aware of the expanse of the universe, and see and hear wonderful things—the likes of which had not been seen or heard by the eyes or ears [of anyone] before that." [11]

STOP AND REFLECT: Outline some ways in which the miraculous event of *Miʿrāj* shows us that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ has a special status in the eyes of Allah ﷻ.



The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has a special position in the eyes of Allah ﷻ, and his every action is an example for us. From his patience and forbearance during the economic blockade, to his manners in general, and the way he treated everyone from young to old, we can learn very valuable lessons from his entire life, and must try our best to emulate his way of life *(sīrah)*.

11 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ*, Pp. 131-132.

Activity 1.1a: Review Questions

1. *Miʿrāj* refers to:
   - **a.** The Prophet's ascent to the Heavens
   - **b.** The Prophet's great moral values
   - **c.** The sanctions against the Muslims during the social and economic blockade

2. Shortly after the blockade, which of the Prophet's two beloved family members passed away?
   - **a.** Ḥamzah and Jaʿfar
   - **b.** Lady Khadījah ﷺ and Abū Ṭālib
   - **c.** Ibrāhīm and Qāsim

Activity 1.1b: Qualities of the Prophet ﷺ

We discussed some of the qualities of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ above. Fill out the chart below with the qualities, and one example of a story from this lesson that demonstrates this characteristic. Then, add how you can implement this into your daily life.

QUALITY of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ	**EXAMPLE** of a story from his life which demonstrates this quality	**HOW YOU CAN APPLY** this quality in your own life
ṢABR		
	A poor man with dirty clothes came and sat down in a circle with the Prophet ﷺ and his companions. The man next to him turned away, and the Prophet ﷺ gently asked him why he did that.	
	The Prophet ﷺ happily acted as a camel so that Imām Ḥasan ؑ and Imām Ḥusayn ؑ could ride upon his back, to the astonishment of the people around him.	

1.2 The Spread of Islam

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the change in the circumstances for the Muslims who emigrated from Mecca to Medina; and the Medinites who converted to Islam with Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.
- Outline the main points of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, and how it fundamentally changed the political climate.
- Review the role of the hypocrites in creating and sowing discord amongst the Muslims during their life in Medina, and after the conquest of Mecca.

After Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ announced his Prophethood in Mecca, the enemies of Islam began to oppress his followers. The early Muslims—following the example of the Prophet ﷺ—showed amazing patience and courage despite the intense difficulties.

The people of Medina invited Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his followers to migrate to Medina, and when the environment of Mecca became unbearable, the Muslims all migrated to Medina. The Muslims of Medina accepted them wholeheartedly.

ISLAM SPREADS TO MEDINA

The two tribes of ʿAws and Khazraj had a long-standing enmity and would often have battles in Medina that would sometimes last for years on end. The people of Medina used to go to Mecca to seek help from the Quraysh regarding their tribal wars. On one of these trips, their leader heard the Noble Prophet ﷺ recite verses 151 to 152 of Sūrah al-Anʿām. The recitation included the following:

...and do not kill a soul [whose life] Allah has made inviolable, except with due cause. This is what He has enjoined upon you so that you may exercise your reason. [1]

The words of the Noble Qurʾān affected him greatly. The man and his friends from Medina met the Prophet ﷺ, and the news of the new religion spread very quickly among them.

Afterward, during one of the years that the people of Medina went to Mecca for their pilgrimage, they formally became Muslims; and upon their return to Medina, they took great efforts to spread the message of Islam.[2]

LIFE AFTER MIGRATION

After migrating to Medina, the Muslims were faced with different challenges from the Quraysh and other non-Muslims including the hypocrites and spies who were among their ranks. In order to ease the life of the Muslims, and bring peace between the various tribes and faiths, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ established treaties with different groups.[3]

Another reason why Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ established treaties amongst different groups was in order to spread Islam in a peaceful manner. There were a few obstacles in the way of propagating Islam, such as armed enemies and enmity that existed from beforehand. The Prophet ﷺ knew that if the enemies were disarmed and no longer had an intention to fight the Muslims militarily, then the Muslims would be free to preach Islam, and the people of Arabia would soon submit to the religion of Islam. Indeed, this is what then happened.[4]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 151.
2 Lārī, Sayyid Mujtabā Mūsavī, *Seal of the Prophets and His Message*.
3 For example, after arriving in Medina, the Prophet ﷺ established the constitution of Medina in order to ensure that different tribes and people of various religions (like the Jews of Medina) could peacefully live together.
4 Āyātullāh Jaʿfar Subḥānī, *The Message*.

THE PEACE TREATY OF ḤUDAYBIYYAH[5]

In the year 6 AH, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, along with about 1600 people left from Medina, heading toward Mecca in order to perform *Ḥajj*. They did not carry any weapons with them as a gesture of their good will, and to show that the purpose of their journey was solely to perform the pilgrimage. When the Quraysh found out that the Muslims were on their way, they vowed not to allow them to enter Mecca and stopped them at a place called Ḥudaybiyyah.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ sent an ambassador to the Quraysh with some gifts to explain the intention of the Muslims. However, in response, the Quraysh killed the ambassador's camel and put the ambassador's life in danger.

After many attempts to come to terms with the Quraysh, the Prophet ﷺ was finally able to make a peace treaty with them. This was named the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Although most of the terms in this treaty seemed to be against the Muslims, the Prophet ﷺ accepted them.[6] The treaty included the following:

- There would be no fighting between the Muslims and the Quraysh for ten years.
- Other tribes should be free in giving allegiance to or forming pacts with either the Quraysh or the Muslims.
- Any dependent (like a minor child or a slave) who went to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ from the Quraysh without the permission of their parent/guardian should be returned to the Quraysh, but whoever went to the Quraysh from the Muslims would not be returned.
- The Prophet and his companions (the Muslims) would go back and not enter Mecca that year. However, they could come back and enter Mecca (unarmed) the following year for the pilgrimage, but reside there for only three days.[7]

Some of the companions complained about this treaty. However, the Prophet ﷺ insisted that it was the best thing for Islam. It was this treaty that paved the way for the conquest of Mecca which occurred two years later. Regarding the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

> "Indeed, We have given you (O Muḥammad) a clear victory." [8]

5 Ḥudaybiyyah was a small village near Mecca.
6 Shaykh Mansour Leghaei, *The Revolution of Imam Husain*.
7 Al-Qummī, ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, *The Exegesis of the Holy Qurʾān*.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 1.

QURAYSH VIOLATE THE TREATY

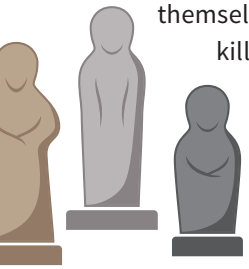
Two years after the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah took place, the tribe of Quraysh violated the treaty and attacked[9] the tribe of Bani Khuzāʿah, who were allies of the Muslims, and killed many of them.

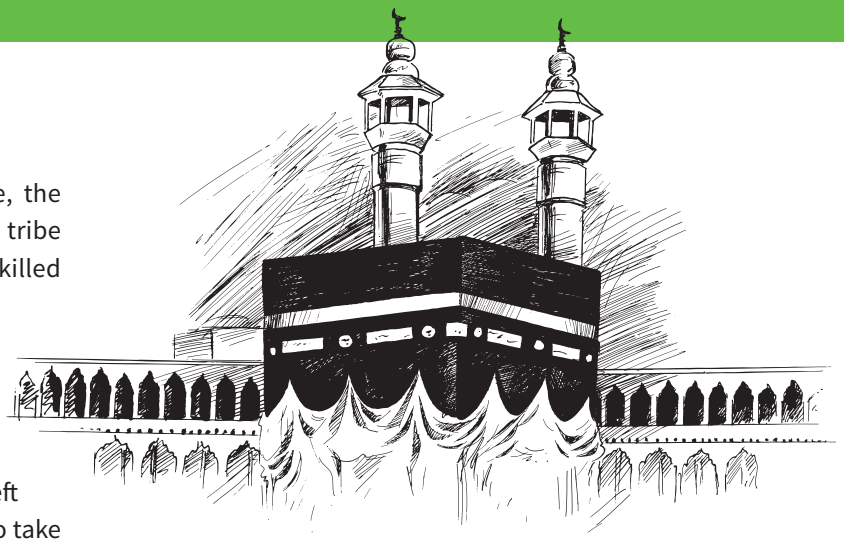
THE CONQUEST OF MECCA

During the month of Ramaḍān in the 8th year AH, shortly after the treaty was broken, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ left Medina with 10,000 Muslims and headed toward Mecca to take on the enemies by surprise. The Noble Prophet ﷺ made it very clear to the Muslims that they should avoid bloodshed at all costs, since starting bloodshed is not allowed near *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*.

When they approached Mecca, the Prophet ﷺ sent a message to the Quraysh telling them how they could remain safe if they surrendered to the Muslims. In order to do this, they would have to place their weapons on the ground, and then either remain in their houses, or seek refuge in the precincts of the Kaʿbah, or the house of Abū Sufyān.[10] The Quraysh realized that they did not have the means to defend themselves against an army of 10,000 Muslims. They also knew that the Prophet ﷺ was a trustworthy person who would not go against his word. Therefore, they surrendered—knowing that they would be safe if they did so.

When the Muslims entered Mecca, there were only a handful of the Quraysh who arrogantly wanted to resist the Muslims, and attacked one of the groups. The Muslims defended themselves and some of the Quraysh who attacked were killed. Other than this, the entry and conquest of Mecca was very peaceful. As soon as the Prophet entered into *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* (where the Kaʿbah is situated), he asked Imām ʿAlī ؑ to break the statues which were on the Kaʿbah.





STOP AND REFLECT: Why was showing the idol worshipers the fact that the idols cannot even defend themselves important?

This proved to the Quraysh and the idol worshipers that if the statues were "gods" then they should have at least been able to defend themselves, let alone protect their worshipers from the Muslims.[11] We can see from this event that the Prophet ﷺ spread Islam through its beauty and logic; and sometimes we have to be patient with the Will of Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why did the Prophet ﷺ encourage the spread of Islam through the beauty of worship and logic? Does everyone believe that Islam was spread this way?

9 The Prophet at that time had sent a group of Muslims to the frontiers of Syria to punish the Romans for attacking and killing unprotected Muslims. Although there were not many casualties, the Muslims did not return with the expected victory. The Quraysh heard about this and thought that the Muslims had weakened militarily. Thus, they took the opportunity to disturb the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity created by the treaty, and attacked the Muslims.

10 Abū Sufyān was the husband of Hind (who had eaten the liver of Ḥamzah, the uncle of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who was martyred during the Battle of Uḥud). He accepted Islam out of fear during the Prophet's conquest of Mecca.

11 *The Message*.

THE PROPHET'S STRUGGLES WITH THE HYPOCRITES

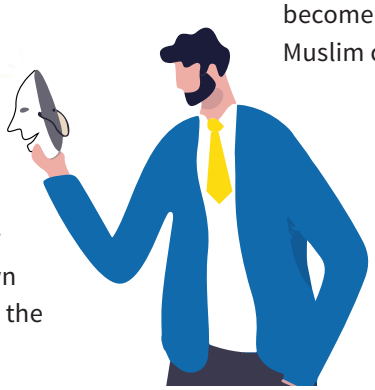
As we have learned, the Prophet ﷺ struggled with opposition from people who were against Islam throughout his entire lifetime. This was not his only struggle. Although the Prophet ﷺ had many righteous companions such as Salmān, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, Miqdād ibn al-Aswad, and ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir, there were many "companions" who disobeyed him, and some who were hypocrites. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

And among those around you of the Bedouins, there are hypocrites; and (also) from among the people of Medina—they are steeped in hypocrisy. You do not know them; (but) We know them. [12]

STOP AND REFLECT: Who is Allah ﷻ speaking to when He says: "You do not know them?" Why would Allah ﷻ say that this person or people do not know the hypocrites?

THE HYPOCRITES

Walīd ibn ʿAqabah[13] was a supposedly reliable Muslim, hence the Prophet ﷺ appointed him as the tax *(zakāh)* collector. One of the tribes that he was sent to was Banī al-Muṣṭaliq. On his way there, Walīd started to remember the battles that occurred between his own tribe and the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq during the pre-Islamic era.



He thought that the tribe of Banī al-Muṣṭaliq would be hostile to him as soon as they saw him, so without even addressing the tribe, he returned to the Prophet ﷺ and told him that this tribe did not want to pay their taxes *(zakāh)*. News spread that the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq had refused to pay the *zakāh,* and had turned against the Muslims. When the tribe heard this news, they sent representatives to Medina to clear their name. They told the Prophet ﷺ that Walīd had not even spoken to them. They explained that they were actually happy to have received him, and had even gathered as a group to present him their *zakāh*, so as to not show any hostility to him. On that occasion, the following verse was revealed:

O you who believe! If a vicious (wicked) character (person) brings you some news, then verify it, lest you should visit [harm] on some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done. [14]

STOP AND REFLECT: What did this verse mean for the Muslims at that time? How can you apply it to your own life?

This was an example of how some hypocrites—who had only become Muslims for their own personal benefits—affected the Muslim community in a negative way.

12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tawbah (9), Verse 101. In the previous verse (100), Allah ﷻ praises the companions, and this is the verse which some other schools of thought adhere to in order to prove that ALL of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ (who were contemporary with him) were trustworthy. However in that verse, Allah ﷻ is praising some of the companions, not all of them. He says: *"And the first forerunners (those who embraced Islam first—the early Muslims) FROM AMONG the emigrants (Muhījirīn) and AMONG the helpers (Anṣār), and those who followed them with righteous deeds, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him."* Therefore, Allah ﷻ here is very selective about the companions and is not pleased with all of them because some or many of them were hypocrites. This is explained in the next verse (101) which is mentioned above. This is important when assessing whether a narration reported by a companion from the Prophet ﷺ is authentic or not. Sunnīs believe that they can accept any *ḥadīth* from any companion. However, Shīʿahs believe that all companions are subject to assessment and scrutiny before taking their word.

13 Some people say that he repented and became a better Muslim. However, later in the reign of ʿUthmān, Walīd was made the governor of Kūfah. He used to lead the congregational *(jamāʿah)* prayers while he was drunk, recited four *rakaʿāt* instead of two for *Fajr* prayer, and openly committed many other sins.

14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 6.

Abū Hurayrah[15] is another example of a hypocrite: one who fabricated many narrations and attributed them to the Noble Prophet ﷺ. The books of *ḥadīth* that Sunnī Muslims hold in high regard are filled with thousands of narrations from Abū Hurayrah, even though he was only with the Prophet ﷺ for at most the last four years of the Prophet's life. He used to narrate so many traditions that other companions of the Prophet ﷺ would question his reliability.[16] He used to make up narrations and attribute them to the Prophet ﷺ at the request of Muʿāwiyah. For example, he reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: "There are [only] three individuals who are considered trustworthy by Allah: I [the Prophet himself], Jibrāʾīl, and Muʿāwiyah." [17]

These were the types of personalities that the Noble Prophet ﷺ had to struggle against. Having overcome the external enemies of Islam, the Prophet ﷺ had an even more difficult task of fighting the internal enemies of the religion. They called themselves "Muslims" so that they could enjoy power and wealth, but they were in fact trying to undermine Islam from within. Thanks to the efforts of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, we can still distinguish true Islam from the falsehood that the hypocrites tried to advance. Unfortunately, however, they damaged the progress and spread of Islam in a great way.

THE TEACHINGS OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ trained and guided people in two main ways. He worked with many individuals and trained them, passing on to them the pure teachings of Islam that he embodied in one-on-one relationships. On the other hand, he recognized the reality of how Islam needed a political order to attain its goals. Forming a government, establishing an army, and sending letters to other governments—all of these were indicative of his astute statesmanship. His ten years of ruling in Medina are forever recorded in history as a shining example of how a true government should be. When he passed away, 23 blessed years after the first revelation, he left behind a community at the peak of power and dignity. This same system and community, within a short span of time, became the most powerful force in the world.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ taught that a person should only submit to Allah ﷻ—not to society, not to rulers, not to the majority, and not to anyone at all. He taught that absolute submission to Allah ﷻ alone is the only path to true freedom.

In teaching freedom, he also taught us to avoid shameful sins. He urged us to be true to ourselves, our values, and our ideals, rather than succumbing to sinful desires which were ultimately destructive. Once a person chooses the path of sin, they begin a journey of sometimes slow, but always inevitable, self-destruction, and slavery to the devil, and to one's own low desires.

STOP AND REFLECT: Was the Prophet ﷺ able to communicate the entirety of his message for all people? How did the people of his time either help or hinder him when he tried to communicate to them?

15 Mūsawī, Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, *Abū Hurayrah*.
16 Bukhāqi, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari,* Vol. 1, P. 135; Al-Ḥajjāj, Muslim ibn, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* Vol. 3, P. 1660.
17 Āyatullāh Makārim, *Tārīkh Baghdad*, Vol. 5, P. 455.

Activity 1.2a: Review Questions

1. Why did the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims migrate to Medina?

2. After how many years of living in Medina did he go back to Mecca? Was he allowed to enter the first time he tried to go back?

3. How did Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ conquer Mecca?

Activity 1.2b: Highlighting the Struggles

1. Describe some of the struggles that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ had to endure with some of the hypocrites that were part of his community in Medina.

2. Do your own research to find an example of a hypocrite during the time of the Prophet ﷺ—not included in the stories above. Be sure to include your source, and write a brief summary of this person's life and actions.

CHAPTER 2

Lives of the Maʿṣūmīn علیهم السلام

2.1 Imām ʿAlī علیه السلام

2.2 Imām ʿAlī's Valor and Humility

2.3 Sayyidah Fāṭimah علیها السلام

2.4 The Life of Imām Ḥasan علیه السلام

2.5 Imām Ḥusayn علیه السلام:
The Necessity of a Just Leader

2.6 Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq علیه السلام: A Wise Exemplar

2.7 The Life of Imām al-Kāẓim علیه السلام

2.8 Imām al-Kāẓim's Imprisonment

2.9 Imām Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف: The Universal Savior

2.1 Imām ʿAlī ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

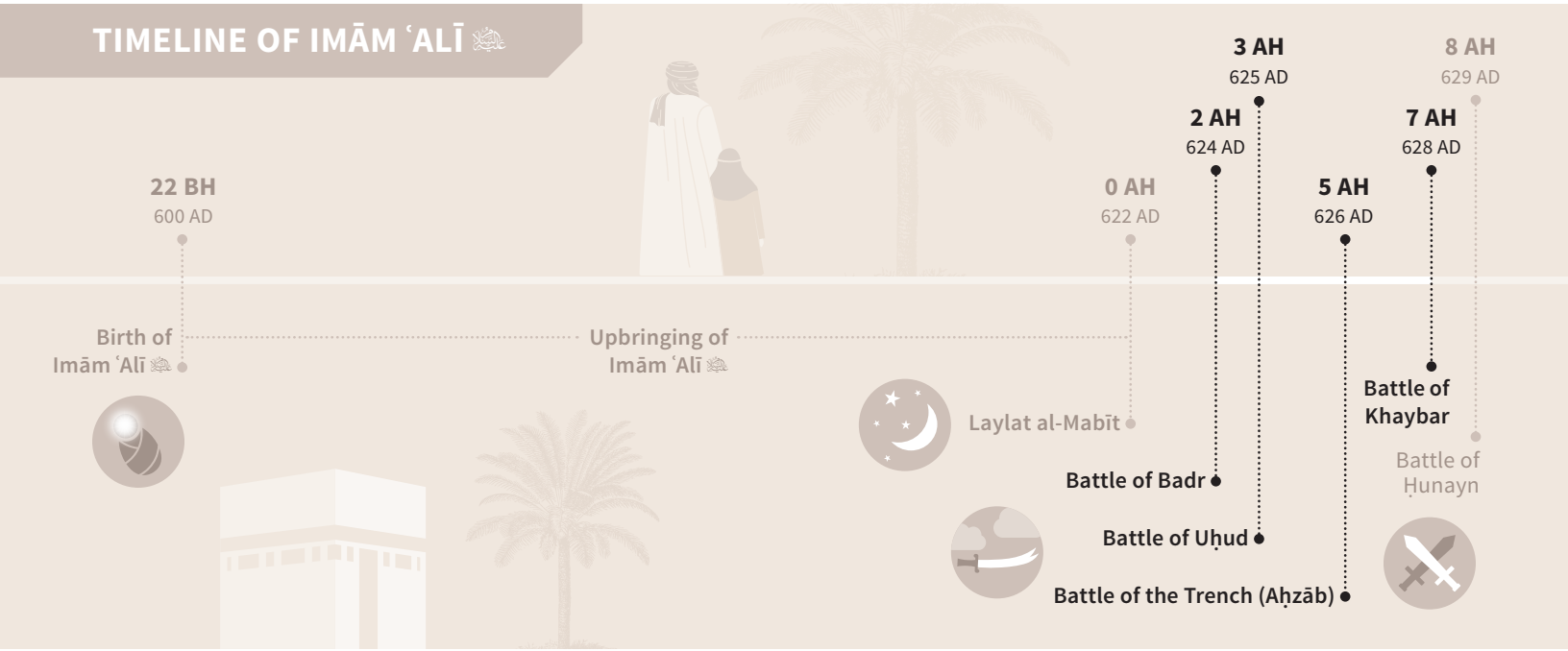
WE WILL:

- Outline the first two major battles that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had to lead the Muslims in.
- Explain the necessity of having true trust *(tawakkul)* in Allah ﷻ for mental and physical strength.
- Understand how Imām ʿAlī ﷺ exemplified this true trust *(tawakkul)* during the battles of Badr and Uḥud.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ

Name	ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ
Kunyah	Abul Ḥasan, Abul Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb
Title	Amīrul Muʾminīn
Parents	Ḥaḍrat Abū Ṭālib and Lady Fāṭimah bint Asad ﷺ
Date of Birth	13th Rajab 22 BH (600 AD), 30 ʿĀm al-Fīl
Birthplace	Inside of the Noble Kaʿbah, Mecca, Arabia
Ring Inscription	المُلْكُ لِلهِ الوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّار - The Kingdom belongs exclusively to Allah, the One, the Almighty
Number of Children	27
Duration of Imāmah	30 Years
Date of Martyrdom	21st of the month of Ramaḍān, 40 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Masjid al-Kūfah, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Struck by Ibn Muljim while offering *Fajr* prayers
Lifespan	63 Years
Location of Shrine	Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ



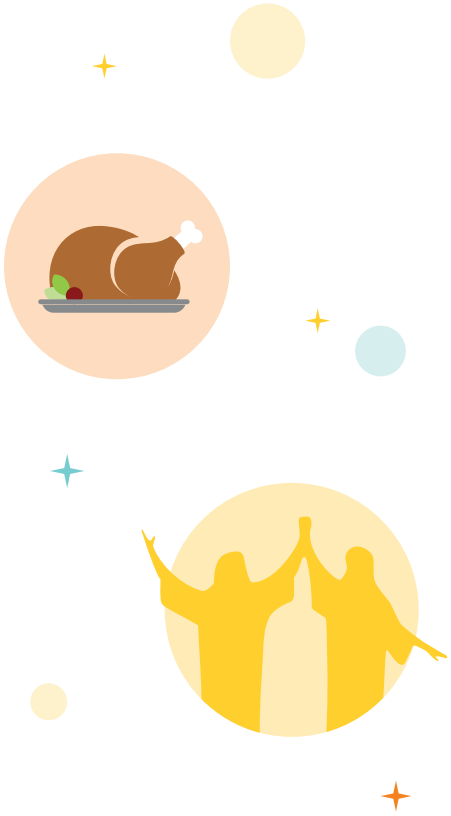
INTRODUCTION

Divine guides play a significant role in helping us get closer to Allah ﷻ. After the seal of Prophethood with Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the 12 Imāms ؑ—starting with Imām ʿAlī ؑ—were the Divinely-appointed leaders whom Allah ﷻ designated to guide all of humanity. The role of an Imām ؑ is to explain the Divine message and the religion sent by Allah ﷻ to the people. The 12 Imāms ؑ teach humankind about true Islam, and how to remain steadfast on the right path. Following in their footsteps is following in the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ toward Allah ﷻ.

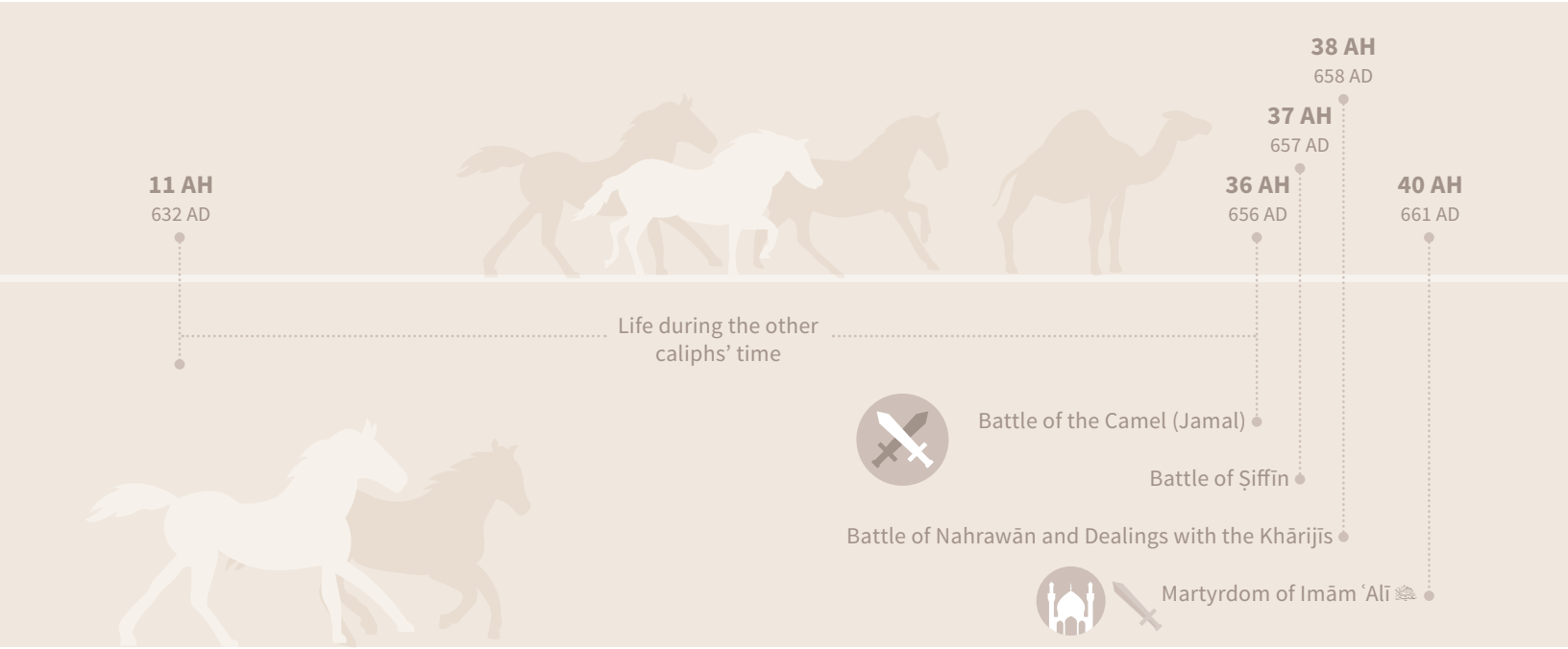
During the Prophet's life, there were multiple times when he indicated that Imām ʿAlī ؑ was going to be his successor. We have discussed *Daʿwat Dhul ʿAshīrah* (Invitation and Summoning the Family), the event of Ghadīr Khumm, and other events in previous years.

STOP AND REFLECT: Recall how *Daʿwat Dhul ʿAshīrah* and the event of Ghadīr Khumm proved that Imām ʿAlī ؑ was going to be the next Divinely-appointed guide after the Prophet's death.

However, the Muslims of that time were resistant to this idea and the other commandments of the Prophet ﷺ; and when he neared his death, they disobeyed him and did not even let him write down who the Imām after him would be, even though he had already announced it on several occasions. As Shīʿah Muslims, it should be clear to us that Divine guides play a significant role in helping us become closer to Allah ﷻ. These guides have special traits, such as: immaculateness from sins *(ʿiṣmah)*, exalted character, upholding justice, extreme patience, etc. Imām ʿAlī ؑ showed us these traits many times in his life.



ʿIṢMAH:
immaculateness from sins



LIFE OF IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ DURING THE PROPHET'S GOVERNMENT

Before Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ performed the Migration *(Ḥijrah)* from Mecca to Medina, he left behind instructions for Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to finish certain tasks in Mecca, and then join him at the outskirts of Medina so they could enter that city together. On the night of the *Ḥijrah*, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ slept in the bed of the Prophet ﷺ, and this verse was revealed:

And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most Kind to [His] servants. [1]

One of the tasks that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was commanded to perform was to return the trusts *(amānāt)* to their rightful owners which had been given by the Muslims in Mecca to the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Since he left secretly, he was not able to return all of their trusts before leaving. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ gave Imām ʿAlī ﷺ this special responsibility knowing that he was the best person to complete this task.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ then took some of the remaining Muslims with him, including Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, and his own mother Lady Fāṭimah bint Asad, and joined the Prophet ﷺ in Qubāʾ, a place which was between Mecca and Medina. Together, all of them entered Medina, and were welcomed by the people there.[2]

BATTLES BY THE QURAYSH

Life in Medina was good for the Muslims, as they were able to establish their own Islamic government and learn from the Noble Prophet ﷺ. However, the Quraysh became furious when they heard how successful Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was at spreading Islam in Medina. They plotted to weaken the Muslims through wars.

In each battle, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was a pillar of strength, and the Prophet ﷺ reminded the Muslims about Imām ʿAlī's high status in the eyes of Allah ﷻ.

This strength that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had came from his devotion to Islam and his full trust *(tawakkul)* in Allah ﷻ. This gave him such strength that was unmatched by any of his opponents.

IMĀM ʿALĪ'S ETHICS OF WAR

In Arabian society, a battle would start with one-on-one combat, with the fiercest warriors representing each side. The Prophet ﷺ would choose Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to represent the Muslim army, to show the non-Muslims the strength, courage, and prowess in battle that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ epitomized.

STOP AND REFLECT: How would choosing Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to represent the Muslims in one-on-one combat be an example for the Muslims?

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ showed the Muslims that *tawakkul* includes following the commandments of Allah ﷻ, even when the enemies are using tactics that seem strategic, but are against the laws of Allah ﷻ. If an enemy of Islam would try to tempt the Muslims into using unethical tactics, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ would remind them about Allah's commands, and tell them how obedience to Allah ﷻ is the paramount tactic to winning any battle.

Following the commands of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Imām ﷺ did not allow women, children, the elderly, or the sick to be harmed in any way. Even at times of victory, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ never gloated at the defeat of his enemies or held grudges against them.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 207.
2 ʿAllāmah Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, Vol. 3, Pp. 162-170.

IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ IN THE BATTLE OF BADR

STOP AND REFLECT: What is "Badr?" What do you know about the Battle of Badr?

The first battle between the Muslims and the disbelievers of Mecca was fought at the Valley of Badr. The Noble Prophet ﷺ decided to retrieve the Muslims' property that the Quraysh had stolen. A trade caravan was returning with this property from Syria.

When the Quraysh became aware that the Muslims were waiting at the Valley of Badr, Abū Ṣufyān, the leader of the caravan, sent an urgent message to Mecca. A huge Meccan army, under the command of Abū Jahl, made their way toward Badr.

The two sides clashed on the 17th during the month of Ramaḍān, in the year 2 AH. The Muslim army consisted of only 313 soldiers—mostly on foot, while the Meccan army had 900 well-equipped soldiers. However, the Muslims were not dismayed by the difference in the size of their army or how well-equipped their enemies were.

They fought with great confidence—certain of Allah's help with them. The sincere Muslims had complete reliance *(tawakkul)* on Allah ﷻ in this battle, following the example of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. The Qurʾān describes how Allah ﷻ sent angels to make their hearts strong and confident:

When you appealed to your Lord for help, He answered you: 'Indeed, I will aid you with a thousand angels, one after another (in lines).' Allah did not appoint it but as a good news, and to reassure your hearts. And there is no victory except from Allah. Indeed Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. [3]

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ went into the heat of the Meccan army, killing enemy soldiers fearlessly. His skill with the sword struck terror into the hearts of the Meccans, who began to flee. Thus, the Muslims achieved a great victory in the Battle of Badr.[4]

IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ IN THE BATTLE OF UḤUD

The Meccans were determined to take revenge for the 70 people who were killed in the Battle of Badr. When the Noble Prophet ﷺ blocked the trade routes of the Quraysh to Iraq, this gave the chiefs of the Quraysh another reason to fight against the Muslims. The Quraysh sold the goods they had acquired from selling the Muslims' belongings, and used the profit to equip their army.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ received news about the Quraysh's plans to attack them from his uncle ʿAbbās, who lived in Mecca. On the 7th of Shawwal, in the year 3 AH, the Muslims began to set up their army. In addition to the soldiers on foot, 50 archers were posted at a place between the hills of Uḥud on the outskirts of Medina, to guard the army from an attack from behind. They had strict orders by the Prophet ﷺ not to leave their posts, regardless of what was happening in the battle.[5]

The Muslims continued to attack the enemy successfully, and the Meccans began to lose heart and started to flee. It was at this point that some of the Muslims made a terrible mistake. Instead of following the orders of the Prophet ﷺ and staying at their posts on the mountains, they laid down their own weapons and started to gather the war spoils left behind by the enemies.

They were overconfident since they had won the last battle and seemed to be winning this one. Instead of trusting in Allah ﷻ and following the command of the Prophet ﷺ, they chose to abandon their positions so that they could claim some of the material things that the non-Muslims had left behind.

One of the Meccans commanders, Khālid ibn Walīd saw the opportunity to attack the Muslims from behind. He gathered his men and launched a furious attack from behind the hills of Uḥud, which were no longer protected. The Muslims were taken by surprise and did not know what to do. In the confusion, their ranks became disorganized. So now, the Meccans were able to attack them from the front and behind, and the Muslims were surrounded. The Meccan army also spread a rumor that the Prophet ﷺ had been killed, causing the Muslims to become afraid and erupt in further chaos.[6]

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verses 9-10.
4 Āshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, Vol. 2, P. 68.
5 Ibn Hishām, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, P. 66.
6 Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, Vol. 1, P. 232; Ibn Saʿd, *Aṭ-Ṭibāqāt al-Kubrā*, Vol. 2, Pp. 61-62.

STOP AND REFLECT: What mistake did the Muslims make in the Battle of Uḥud? What lesson can we take from this in our own lives?

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ fought so hard in this battle that his sword broke, and the Noble Prophet ﷺ gave him his own sword, *Dhul-fiqār.* In appreciation of this bravery, the voice of Angel Jibrāʾīl ﷺ was heard from above saying:

لَا فَتَى إِلَّا عَلِي وَلَا سَيف إِلَّا ذُو الفِقَار

"There is no hero except ʿAlī, and there is no sword except Dhul-fiqār!" [7]

At the end of this battle, 70 Muslims were martyred, and another 70 were wounded. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was also heavily wounded. The Meccans lost 22 warriors—of which 12 of them were killed by Imām ʿAlī ﷺ.

This tragic defeat was a lesson and test for the Muslims, and as a result, they emerged more eager and determined to defend their faith and the cause of Islam.[8]

AFTER THE BATTLE OF UḤUD

On the way back to Mecca, it occurred to the Meccans that they should make a surprise attack on Medina. They thought it would be an opportune time to gain a decisive victory at a time when the Muslims were suffering from the losses of the battle. Word of their plotting reached the Prophet ﷺ, and he ordered the Muslims to gather their arms and preemptively ward off the attack of the Meccans. The Qurʾān describes this situation as follows:

Those who responded to Allah and the Apostle [even] after they had been wounded—for those of them who have been virtuous and Godwary there shall be a great reward. Those to whom the [hypocritical] people said: 'Indeed, people have gathered against you, so fear them…' [9]

From this verse, we can tell that there were hypocrites among the Muslims who, rather than supporting the call of the Prophet ﷺ, tried to spread fear among the ranks about the impending attack. In response, there were a group of devout individuals who responded to the call. Allah ﷻ describes this in the Qurʾān:

...That only increased them in faith, and they said: 'Allah is sufficient for us, and He is an excellent Trustee (Wakīl).' [10]

According to *ḥadīth*, this group of devout Muslims consisted of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and nine others.[11] Despite having over 60 wounds and injuries due to the battle of Badr, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was eager to respond to the call of the Prophet ﷺ. Rather than being discouraged, he felt even stronger when the hypocrites were trying to demoralize the ranks. What was the secret to his success? The verse says that he and the others with him saw Allah ﷻ as their *Wakīl*—their trusted Agent or Trustee. They relied upon and trusted in Allah ﷻ for all of their affairs. This trust is known as *tawakkul.*

7 Al-Ḥuwayzī, ʿAbd ʿAlī, *Tafsīr Nūr ath-Thaqalayn*, Vol. 3, P. 433.
8 *Al-Maghāzī*, Vol. 1, P. 328.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verses 172-173.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 173.
11 Shaykh Muḥsin Qarāʾatī, *Tafsīre Nūr.*

TRUST IN ALLAH ﷻ (TAWAKKUL)

The more we know Allah ﷻ, the more we will acknowledge that He is the only Being with any power in the universe. If we truly believe this, and take Allah ﷻ as our sole helper, then we will not rely upon anything or anyone except Him!

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ was asked regarding the verse:

> "And whoever puts one's trust in Allah, then He will be sufficient for them." [12]

The Imām ؑ replied:

There are various degrees of trust in Allah. One of them is that you should put your trust in Allah for all of your affairs; be content and well pleased with whatever Allah does to you, knowing for certain that He does not cease in His goodness and grace toward you, and know that the final determination is up to Him. So put your full trust in Allah, leaving the matter to Him and relying upon Him in regard to that and everything else. [13]

To take Allah ﷻ as our ultimate helper, knowing that it is **only** with His help that we can accomplish what we want, but still performing our responsibilities, is to have *tawakkul* on Allah ﷻ. Therefore, *tawakkul* means 'to entrust all matters to the Master, and rely upon Him fully.'[14]

There are incorrect ways of understanding and applying *tawakkul,* some of these include:

1. Someone who simply says: "I trust in Allah ﷻ," but when they are faced with difficulties, they practically act as if they do not have a loving, nurturing Master who is in charge of their affairs. Instead, they turn to others for help, and think that the resolution of their problems is with them, and forget that it is Allah ﷻ who is the cause of all causes. True belief about Allah ﷻ being their *Wakīl* has not yet reached their heart.
2. There are those people who say that they trust in Allah ﷻ, but do not learn about their own responsibilities and/or refuse to act according to what Allah ﷻ expects of them. For example, they do not wash their hands before eating and say: "Allah will not make us sick!" Or, instead of studying for an exam, they trust in Allah ﷻ and think that He will magically inspire them with the answers.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ brilliantly demonstrated the true meaning and type of trust that we should have in Allah ﷻ. *Tawakkul* was in his whole being, and it was demonstrated in each and every one of his actions. For example, on the battlefield, he relied completely on Allah ﷻ, but he also performed his duties exactly according to the commands of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. This allowed him to be the strongest of warriors—both physically and mentally.

CONCLUSION

The internal strength that enabled Imām ʿAlī ؑ to be the strongest warrior came from his devotion to Islam and his complete reliance on Allah ﷻ—qualities that his opponents did not have. Through his conduct in serving Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ in battle, Imām ʿAlī ؑ showed true submission and obedience, and is a great example for how we can also create this strong inner strength in our daily lives.

12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah aṭ-Ṭalāq (65), Verse 3.
13 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 265.
14 Āyatullāh Khomeini, *40 Hadith*.

Activity 2.1a: Scavenger Hunt

DIRECTIONS: With a partner, fill out the graphic organizer below to compare and contrast the different battles. Try to finish it as **quickly and correctly** as possible!

	BATTLE OF BADR	BATTLE OF UḤUD
Year		
Location		
Why did it start?		
Who was on the other side of the Muslims?		
Who was on the side of the Prophet ﷺ?		
What was the outcome?		
What did Imām ʿAlī ؑ do?		

Activity 2.1b: Categorizing Tawakkul

SCENARIO	ARE THEY SHOWING TAWAKKUL?	HOW TO IMPROVE (if there are other ways)
Samina has a non-Muslim acquaintance who never seems to be at peace. Samina tells her how reliance on Allah ﷻ is a beautiful outcome of having deep faith in Him. Her acquaintance tells her that faith is irrational. Samina is caught off-guard and remains silent. When she next faces a challenge in her life, Samina finds that she is missing some of that inner peace that she used to have through having trust in Allah ﷻ.		
Zayd is excited to go to college. After getting a scholarship, he says: "Wow, *alḥamdulillāh*, Allah ﷻ made it easy for me." Soon after, the COVID-19 pandemic begins, and he learns that his scholarship has been canceled. He becomes disheartened, and complains to his friends that Allah ﷻ is punishing him for something that is not in his control.	Zayd is only showing *tawakkul* in his words.	
Omaira learns about *tawakkul*. She goes home and sees her mom cutting raw chicken on a wooden cutting board. She is about to cut some oranges on the same cutting board without rinsing it off, because she thinks the chances of getting food poisoning will be rare since she often prays to Allah ﷻ to keep her and her family safe and healthy.		
Musa is having a hard time at home and at school. His little sister has a rare disease, and his parents spend a lot of their time taking care of her. He prays to Allah ﷻ to grant her a cure, and he tries his best to study for school when he is not helping his parents. He tells his teachers that when he needs help and prays to Allah ﷻ, He gives him internal strength and helps him out.		

2.2 Imām ʿAlī's Valor and Humility

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the Battle of Khandaq, and the importance of the role of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ in this battle.
- Demonstrate the traits of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ by providing examples from different battles in his lifetime.
- Learn the different characteristics of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ.
- Show how Imām ʿAlī ﷺ worshiped and praised Allah ﷻ.

THE BATTLE OF KHANDAQ

The third battle of Islam took place in 5 AH, when the Quraysh allied with certain Jewish tribes to fight the Noble Prophet ﷺ. They gathered 10,000 soldiers, and marched toward Medina under the command of Abū Ṣufyān. It was called the Battle of Khandaq—the Battle of the Trench—because after consulting his companions, the Prophet ﷺ devised a plan to create a trench around the unprotected side of Medina. This idea came from Salmān al-Muḥammadī (al-Farsī), who was one of closest companions of the Prophet ﷺ, who was originally from Persia.[1]

When the Meccans saw the trench, they were astonished because it was a new war technique for the Arabs. They tried day and night to cross over the trench, but each time the Muslim soldiers prevented them from crossing. Finally, some of the warriors of the Quraysh, including the famous ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Wudd al-ʿĀmirī, succeeded in passing over the trench at a point where it was not very wide.

ʿAmr was one of the best warriors in all of Arabia, and he was considered equal to 1,000 warriors. He began to challenge the Muslims to fight, but his reputation intimidated them. The Noble Prophet ﷺ urged the Muslims to fight ʿAmr three times. Each time, **only** Imām ʿAlī ﷺ stood up. Finally, the Prophet ﷺ allowed him to go, giving him his own sword and tying a special turban on his head. This was another instance for the Muslims to see that only Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had true faith and was steadfast against even the most fearsome threats.

When Imām ʿAlī ﷺ went into the battlefield, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ exclaimed:

> "Indeed, all of faith *(īmān)* is coming out (to fight) against all of falsehood *(kufr)*!" [2]

A fierce battle then followed.

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think the Prophet's comment above means?

1 Ṣāliḥī Shāmī, Muḥammad, *Subul al-Hudā wa ar-Rishād,* Vol. 5, P. 615.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 20, P. 215.

For a time, so much dust covered both warriors that nobody knew what was happening. According to some reports,[3] suddenly, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ walked away. After some time, the Imām ﷺ returned again, and battled against ʿAmr until the enemy was killed. Later, when people asked the Imām ﷺ why he walked away, then returned back again, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said that ʿAmr had spat on his face. He could have killed ʿAmr right at that time, but he did not want it to be out of anger for himself. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was immaculate and God-centric, and only killed a person for the sake of Allah ﷻ, not for himself or his own desires.

The death of ʿAmr shocked the other warriors who had crossed the trench, and they all fled. After some time, the battle finally came to an end with a great victory for the Muslims.

Even non-Muslims recognize the strength and courage that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had. When a renowned fighter was killed by Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, the family of the slain warrior would take pride that he was killed at the hands of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ.

ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Wadd's sister recited the following eulogy for him:

> *If the killer of ʿAmr were anyone other than who his killer was,*
> *I would have cried over him until the end of time.*
> *However, his killer is he who there is no disgrace in being killed by,*
> *He is the one who was always considered extraordinary in the land.*

Painting by: Hassan RouholAmin

STOP AND REFLECT: From the last lesson, recall some of the traits that were mentioned about Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. How was the Imām ﷺ so strong in every battle? What made him different from the others and the enemy soldiers?

3 Ibn aṭ-Ṭiqṭaqā, *Al-Fakhrī fī al-Ādāb al-Sulṭānīyah wa-ad-Duwal al-Islāmīyah*, P. 49.

THE BATTLE OF KHAYBAR

Another battle that took place after the migration to Medina was the Battle of Khaybar, which was started because the Jews of Khaybar began raiding pastures around Medina. They saw the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah as a sign of weakness of the Muslims, and wanted to use the opportunity to attack them.

The Prophet ﷺ issued a siege on the forts of the Jews in Khaybar in order to protect the Muslims and prevent further raids. As days went by, the Muslims easily captured one fort after another. They then turned their attention to the forts that were heavily guarded. However, they could not gain victory over these even after trying for ten days. Finally, the Noble Prophet ﷺ made a famous announcement where he declared:

> "Tomorrow, I will give the flag to a person who loves Allah and the Prophet, and who is loved by Allah and the Prophet; and Allah will accomplish the conquest of this fort at his hands. He is a man who has never turned his back to the enemy, and does not run away from the battlefield." [4]

All of the soldiers were curious to learn who that person would be; so the next morning they gathered around the Prophet ﷺ to see who would be given the flag.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ asked: "Where is ʿAlī?"

He was informed that Imām ʿAlī ؑ was suffering from an eye infection which was so severe that he was unable to see. The Noble Prophet ﷺ asked that Imām ʿAlī ؑ be brought to him. When the Imām ؑ came, the Prophet ﷺ rubbed his eyes and prayed for his recovery. The eyes of Imām ʿAlī ؑ were instantly cured, and he never had any trouble with them ever again.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ then commanded Imām ʿAlī ؑ to advance against the enemy. He told him to ask the chiefs of the forts to accept Islam. If they refused, then he was to ask them to surrender and live freely under Muslim protection and pay tax to the Islamic state. If this offer was also refused, then he should fight them.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ approached the forts wearing a strong coat of armor, and carrying his double-sided sword *Dhulfiqār*. The Jews sent out one of their best warriors, Ḥārith, to fight against the Muslims.

The Muslim soldiers were struck with fear when they saw the powerful Ḥārith advance toward them. However, Imām ʿAlī ؑ met his challenge, and after a brief fight, Ḥārith lay dead on the ground. The death of Ḥārith enraged his brother Marḥab, who came out of the fort to challenge Imām ʿAlī ؑ. Marḥab's size alone frightened away most of his opponents. He had never been defeated because of his skilled swordsmanship with his three-pronged lance.

4 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 39, P. 11.

The blows of the two warriors struck awe in the hearts of the onlookers. Suddenly, Marḥab plunged his three-pronged lance toward Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, who avoided the thrust; then the Imām ﷺ struck a powerful blow to the head of Marḥab. The sword of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ broke through Marḥab's helmet, stone cap, head, and finally stopped at his teeth.

A silence fell as the Jews of Khaybar unbelievingly watched their champion fall dead. As Imām ʿAlī ﷺ shouted *"Allāhu Akbar"* in victory, several experienced opposing soldiers surrounded Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. However, they could not match his skill, and they too, fell to the ground dead.

During the fight, someone struck a blow at Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, breaking his shield. He turned to the gate of the fort, and wrenched it off of its hinges and used it as a shield. When he stopped using it as a shield, even ten Muslims could not lift it.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ later commented that he had lifted the gate not by his own bodily strength, but rather by the strength that was granted to him by Allah ﷻ.[5]

Painting by: Hassan Rouhol Amin

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ showed us how knowing that we have a purpose and a clear responsibility can help us realize that Allah ﷻ is there with us all of the time. This can give us an internal strength and courage to stand up to anything that is against Allah ﷻ, with the knowledge that the All-Powerful is always with us, and will help us if we put our full trust in Him.

As a result of the bravery of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, the main fort was captured by the Muslims, and soon, all of the other forts were also within their hands. The Muslims lost 20 men in this battle, while the Jews lost 93 men. After the victory, the Prophet ﷺ restored all of the land of the Jews back to them with the orders that half of the profits from their agricultural activity should be given over to the Muslims in return for protection.

5 Ar-Rāzī, Fakhr ad-Dīn, *At-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Vol. 21, P. 77.

HUMILITY

On the battlefield, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ showed matchless bravery and courage such that no one dared to challenge him. However, this same man was very compassionate, and was often seen dining with the poor and feeding them with his own hands.

When he used to engage in private communications with Allah ﷻ, he would be seen crying, and in absolute awe of his Creator. This can be seen in his famous supplications such as: *Duʿāʾ Kumayl, Duʿāʾ al-Mashlūl,* and *Duʿāʾ aṣ-Ṣabāḥ*.

For instance, in *Duʿāʾ Kumayl,* Imām ʿAlī ﷺ recites: "O Allah! Accept my apology, and have pity on my intense sufferings, and set me free from my heavy chains. My Cherisher! Have mercy on the weakness of my body, the delicacy of my skin, and the brittleness of my bones."

During his entire life, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ attached great importance to orphaned children. He used to show so much love to them, and personally be involved in their affairs. Narrations say that he used to place honey and food in the mouth of the orphans with his own hands. When asked why he would not let the orphans eat by themselves he would reply:

> "I am the father of the orphans. I must show compassion to them, and treat them nicely like a father." [6]

Abū Ṭufayl said: "Imām ʿAlī ﷺ used to put honey in the mouths of the orphans with his own hands so many times that one of the Muslims at that time said: 'I wish I was an orphan too, so that I would have received the same attention and kindness from the Commander of the Faithful.'"[7]

STOP AND REFLECT: How does the treatment of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ toward the orphans demonstrate his humility?

6 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 406.
7 Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī-Ṭālib*, Vol. 2, P. 75.

In many other supplications of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, he demonstrates his humility in the form of his submission to Allah ﷻ. A beautiful *duʿāʾ* that is recommended to be recited in the month of Dhul Ḥijjah contains these lines, regarding the signs of Allah ﷻ in the universe:

There is no god but Allah,
the number of nights and days.

There is no god but Allah,
the number of waves in the sea.

There is no god but Allah,
and His mercy is better than what they amass.[8]

There is no god but Allah,
the number of thorns and trees.

There is no god but Allah,
the number of hairs and fur.

There is no god but Allah,
the number of stones and mud.

There is no god but Allah,
the number of blinks of the eyes.

There is no god but Allah,
in the night when it departs and
in the morning when it brightens.[9]

There is no god but Allah,
the number of winds in the deserts and the rocks.

There is no god but Allah,
from today until the Day the trumpet will be blown.[10]

STOP AND REFLECT: How can acknowledging the number of a specific item that Allah ﷻ has created (and realizing that it is not even countable by human beings) help us learn about the Oneness of Allah ﷻ *(Tawḥīd)*?

Allah ﷻ created everything in measure, as it also says in the Qurʾān, and this *duʿāʾ* demonstrates how recognizing the vastness of certain creations can help point us toward the one true God.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ demonstrates how acknowledging the Qualities of Allah ﷻ makes a true servant realize how lowly a person really is, and that humility as a characteristic follows from the recognition of *Tawḥīd*.

CONCLUSION

We discussed Imām ʿAlī's conduct in battle in this lesson and the previous one. Despite his bravery and ability to fight, he never showed arrogance, instead he attributed every good to Allah ﷻ. He showed us true humility—both through his words and his actions.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was famous for his brave fights and leadership styles, however he showed us how to remain a humble servant of Allah ﷻ, and not become proud or boastful because of any fame or power.

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zukhruf (43), Verse 32.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Takwīr (81), Verses 17-18.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verse 102.

Activity 2.2a: Duʿāʾ Time

Pick one of the two passages from the *duʿās* mentioned above. Analyze the passage of the *duʿāʾ,* and write two paragraphs on how it shows submission to Allah ﷻ and how this can translate into humility.

Activity 2.2b: Summarizing the Battles

With a partner, fill out the graphic organizer below for the Battles of Khandaq and Khaybar.

	BATTLE OF KHANDAQ	BATTLE OF KHAYBAR
Year		
Location		
Why did it start?		
Who was the enemy?		
Who was on the Prophet's side?		
What was the outcome?		
What was the role of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ in this battle?		

2.3 Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

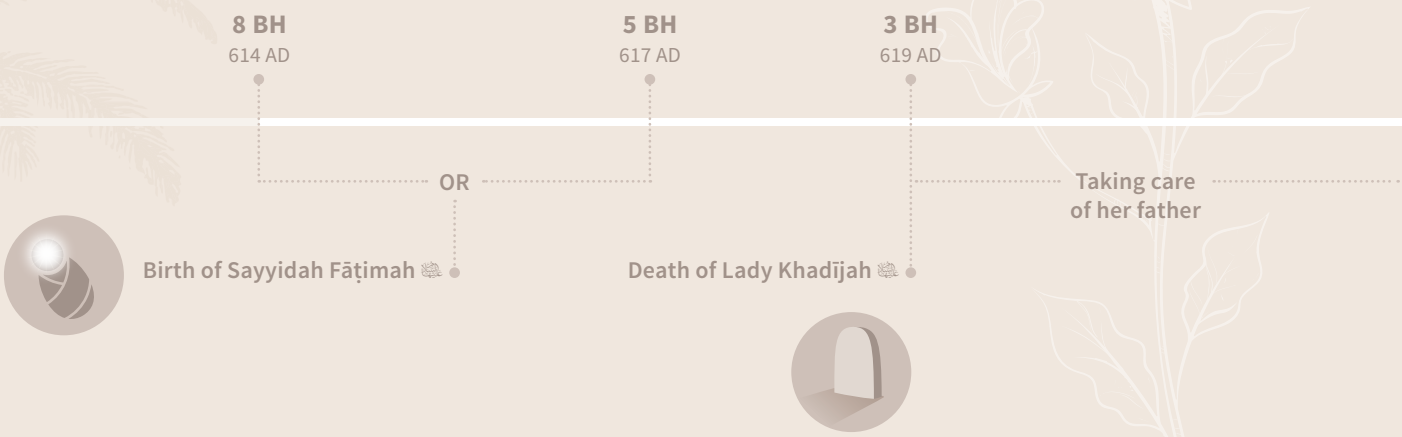
WE WILL:

- Recognize how Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ was a worshiper *(ʿābidah)*, a striver *(mujāhidah)*, and had command over her family life.
- Understand the effects of the upbringing *(tarbiyah)* of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ on her children.
- Discuss the events of *Mubāhalah* and *Ḥadīth al-Kisāʾ*.

AN OVERVIEW OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ

Name	Fāṭimah ﷺ bint Muḥammad ﷺ
Kunyah	Umm Abīhā (Mother of her father); Ummul Aʾimmah (Mother of the 11 Imāms)
Title	Az-Zahrāʾ (the radiant one, or a flower); Al-Batūl
Parents	Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and Lady Khadījah bint Khuwaylid ﷺ
Date of Birth	20th Jumādā al-Ākhirah 5 or 8 BH
Birthplace	Mecca, Arabia
Number of Children	5 (3 sons and 2 daughters)
Date of Martyrdom	13th Jumādā al-Ūlā 11 AH, or 3rd Jumādā al-Ākhirah 11 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Medina, Arabia
Cause of Martyrdom	Struck by a burning door and inflicted with other injuries
Lifespan	18 Years
Location of Grave	Medina (exact location is unknown), Arabia

TIMELINE OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ



In the previous grade, we learned about the birth of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, and the beginning of her life. We discussed how she was given the title of *Umm Abīhā*[1]—the mother of her father—and how she had deep awareness *(maʿrifah)* of the status of her father as the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

We discussed how we can show love toward her by being obedient to Allah ﷻ, taking her as a role model, and following her in doing the virtuous actions that she performed.

In this lesson, we will discuss how Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ was aware of all of her responsibilities, and was even socially and politically active.

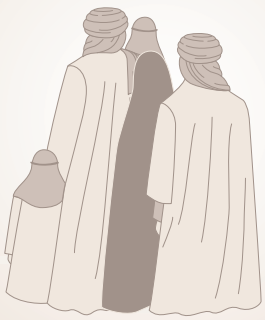
Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ had three roles that she fulfilled perfectly: providing a peaceful family life, being a *mujāhidah* (one who struggles in the path of Allah ﷻ), and being an *ʿābidah* (one who worships Allah ﷻ).[2] We will discuss the next part of her life—her family life up to the passing away of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—in light of these three roles.

MAʿRIFAH: deep awareness

ʿĀBIDAH: one who worships Allah ﷻ

MUJĀHIDAH: one who struggles in the path of Allah ﷻ

1 Irbilī, *Kashf al-Ghumma*, Vol. 1, P. 438.
2 Āyatullāh Khamenei, *A 250 Year Old Person*.



2 or 3 AH
624 or 625 AD

9 AH
631 AD

11 AH
632 AD

Mubahala

Taking care of her family

Marriage

Riḥlah (Death) of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

Dispute over Fadak & Bayt al-Aḥzān

Supporting Imām ʿAlī ﷺ

Martyrdom of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ

HER MARRIAGE TO IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ UP TO THE PROPHET'S DEATH

The condition of many of the Muslims during the early years after their migration to Medina was very difficult. Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ would spend her day working on household chores, taking care of her children, and praying for many hours a day. She worked so hard to the point that blisters formed on her hands, a scar formed on her chest from carrying heavy water holders, and she was in a lot of pain.

One day, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said to her: "Why don't you ask your father for some assistance? He might know a servant who can help you around the house."

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ went to the Prophet's house, but was too shy to ask him since he had some guests present, so she returned home.

The next day, the Prophet ﷺ visited them, and from Allah ﷻ he was given the knowledge about what she had wanted to ask him.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ told Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ:

"Shall I teach you something that is better for you than a servant, and even greater than the world with everything in it?"

When she replied in the affirmative, he continued:

"After every prayer recite:
Allāhu Akbar 34 times, then *Alḥamdulillāh* 33 times, and finally *Subḥānallāh* 33 times. Surely this is better for you than that which you wanted, the world, and all of its belongings."[3]

This is known as the *tasbīḥ* of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, and is a great blessing and tool for us in instances of hardships, and is recommended to be recited after every prayer, and before we go to sleep. After a few years, the Noble Prophet ﷺ gifted her a servant named Fiḍḍā. Lady Fiḍḍā would work one day in the house, and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ would work the next day.[4] In this way, there was justice, and the servant was not overworked, nor did she feel humiliated.

3 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, Vol. 1, P. 320. A similar *ḥadith* can be found in *Daʿāim al-Islām*, Vol. 5, P. 368, where it says that after completing the *tasbīḥ*, a person should recite once: *'Lā ilāhā illallāh.'*

4 Anṣārī, *Al-Mawsūʿa al-Kubrā*, Vol. 17, P. 429.

UPBRINGING OF HER CHILDREN

Sayyidah Fāṭimah 🕊 and Imām ʿAlī 🕊 had four children together who survived (and one son who was miscarried), and she took great care to raise them in the best way. She taught them the best of manners, and encouraged them to learn from and spend time with their father and grandfather.

It seems that Imām Ḥasan 🕊 made it a habit to wake up in the early hours of the night and join his mother, Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ 🕊 in her Night Prayers *(Ṣalāt al-Layl)*. Imām Ḥasan 🕊 observed that his mother prayed for the believing men and women. When the prayers were over, he asked her:

> "O Mother, you prayed for everyone, but I did not hear anything for yourself or anyone in our family!"
> His mom lovingly replied: "O my son Ḥasan, remember one thing—neighbors come first, then one's household follows."[5]

With her own actions, paired with wise words, she was able to impart valuable lessons to all of her children.

Sayyidah Fāṭimah 🕊, in her care toward her loved ones—starting from her father up to her entire family—right until the time of her death, taught us about the importance of family. She used to answer questions about Islam from other women during that time, and whenever the need arose, she assisted her father in his mission. But most of her efforts took place inside the private sphere of her home, not in the public eye. She showed us that success is not always found in being public and taking on visible roles.

STOP AND REFLECT: How does social media influence the idea of success today? Are most people who are viewed as being successful in visible roles?

We can see from Sayyidah Fāṭimah 🕊 that engaging in self-praise or self-glorification is not necessary to be successful. A common form of self-idolizing is social media. The primary purpose of many social media platforms has become self-admiration and showing off to others. Self-praise, in many cases, can be detrimental to spiritual growth and gaining nearness to Allah ﷻ, despite how normal it has become in some cultures.

Sayyidah Fāṭimah 🕊 was successful despite never having fought in a battle, no formal teaching in a university, nor ever having written a book. When the angels used to come to her and give her certain predictions, she dictated those to Imām ʿAlī 🕊 who compiled them into a book known as *Muṣḥaf Fāṭimah*. Sayyidah Fāṭimah 🕊 was so successful and beloved to Allah ﷻ through being the best worshiper, and fulfilling all of her duties.

5 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 82.

THE EVENT OF MUBĀHALAH

MUBĀHALAH: a type of spiritual battle between two groups where they both pray to Allah ﷻ to remove His Mercy from the group that is incorrect and misguided

In the 8th year after the migration to Medina, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was challenged to a debate by the Christians of Najran regarding the status of Prophet ʿĪsā ؑ. After this group stubbornly refused to accept his logical arguments, Allah ﷻ commanded the Prophet ﷺ to challenge them to a *mubāhalah*. A *mubāhalah* is a type of spiritual battle between two groups where they both pray to Allah ﷻ to remove His Mercy from the group that is incorrect and misguided. This clarifies who is correct when there is a major disagreement.

Allah ﷻ said to His final Messenger ﷺ:

فَمَنْ حَآجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا۟ نَدْعُ أَبْنَآءَنَا وَأَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَّعْنَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَـٰذِبِينَ

Then whoever argues with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, then say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls—then let us pray earnestly, and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars (among us). [6]

The next day, the Prophet ﷺ went for the *mubāhalah* and took with him only four individuals [as per the command of Allah ﷻ]: his sons [Imām Ḥasan ؑ and Imām Ḥusayn ؑ], his women [Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ], and the one who was so close to him as if he was his own self [Imām ʿAlī ؑ].

When the Christians saw the faithful faces of these individuals [who were also known as the *Ahlul Kisāʾ* ؑ] radiating with Divine light *(nūr)*, they realized that they were misguided and immediately backed away from the challenge.

In spite of the fact that 'our women' in the verse is a plural noun in Arabic and incorporates at least three females, the Noble Prophet ﷺ only took Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ. This shows that she fulfilled the qualities of all women in that verse, and that there was no other woman like her. Conversely, the Christians had brought many women to represent them. In this Event of Mubāhalah, the Prophet ﷺ chose only five people from the Ahlul Bayt ؑ—including himself—to represent all of Islam because of their lofty spiritual status and truthfulness. This indicates the highest level of purity *(ṭahārah)* of these individuals in all aspects of life!

The Bishop of Najrān, who had come to face the Muslims, said about these five personalities:

"I see faces such that if someone asked Allah through them to move a mountain from its place, He would even move the mountain." [7]

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 61.
7 Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *Muntahal Āmāl*, Vol. 1, P. 234.

ḤADĪTH AL-KISĀʾ

In *Ḥadīth al-Kisāʾ*, we learn about the great status of the five from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. In the Qurʾān, Allah revealed *Āyah at-Taṭhīr,* when the event of the cloak—*al-Kisāʾ* transpired:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

"Indeed, Allah desires to keep away all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification." [8]

In this event, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was not feeling well, so he visited the house of his daughter, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and asked her for a Yemeni cloak.

One by one, the immediate members of this family came to the door of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, and after greeting her, they went to see the Prophet ﷺ and asked him for permission to enter under the cloak with him. First her two sons—Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ—came one after the other, and addressed her by saying: "Peace be upon you, O mother." She replied to each of them in a very loving way: "And upon you be peace, O light of my eyes, and the delight of my heart."

Then Imām ʿAlī ﷺ entered the house and said to her: "Peace be upon you, O daughter of the Prophet of Allah;" to which she replied: "And upon you be peace, O father of Ḥasan, and the Commander of the Faithful."

They then entered the room where the Prophet ﷺ was, and asked him if they could join him under the cloak. Soon, the Prophet ﷺ was joined by Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ. At this point, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed to Allah ﷻ that these are the people of his household—the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. The *ḥadīth* says that Allah ﷻ told Jibrāʾīl that this is Fāṭimah, her children, her husband, and her father. The description of these people was done through Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ who was at the center point, and this indicates her very high status.

The Prophet ﷺ mentioned how special these four people are to him, and prayed to Allah ﷻ to bless them and remove from them all impurities. Allah ﷻ then told His angels that He created this entire world and everything in it only for the love of these five individuals. He then sent Angel Jibrāʾīl to join them under the cloak and inform the Prophet ﷺ that his *duʿāʾ* has been accepted.

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ raised Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, Lady Zaynab, and Lady Umm Kulthūm as the best of role models. She dedicated her time to ensure the success of the believers through these blessed children.

When the Prophet ﷺ was close to leaving this world, he consoled Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and whispered something in her ear that gave her the strength to bear her dear father's death. It has been narrated that he told her that she would soon join him in the next world.

In the 11th year after Ḥijrah, in the month of Ṣafar, the Noble Prophet ﷺ passed away. With the death of the final Messenger ﷺ, came the hardest of times for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 33.

Activity 2.3a: Review Questions

1. In the verse of *Taṭhīr*, what does it mean that Allah ﷻ has purified the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ thoroughly? Purified them from what?

2. Why do you think the Prophet ﷺ only took those four individuals with him to the *mubāhalah*?

Activity 2.3b: Timeline

Create a timeline, with the following dates, for the life of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ. Match the events to the dates.

____ **1. 8 or 5 BH** (617 AD or 614 AD)

____ **2. 3 BH** (619 AD)

____ **3. 3 BH to 2 or 3 AH** (619 AD to 624/625 AD)

____ **4. 2 or 3 AH** (624/625 AD)

____ **5. 2 or 3 AH to 11 AH** (624/625 AD to 632 AD)

____ **6. 9 AH** (631 AD)

____ **7. 11 AH** (632 AD)

____ **8. 11 AH** (632 AD)

____ **9. 11 AH** (632 AD)

____ **10. 11 AH** (632 AD)

A Marriage

B Taking care of her family

C Dispute over *Fadak* and *Bayt al-Aḥzān*

D Birth of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ

E Martyrdom of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ

F Death of Lady Khadījah ﷺ

G Prophet Muḥammad's Death

H Taking care of her father

I *Mubāhalah*

J Supporting Imām ʿAlī ﷺ

Activity 2.3c: Personal Connections

Reflect on the three traits of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ that we mentioned above.

- First, define the term.
- Then, use an example of a story from Sayyidah Fāṭimah's life where she demonstrated this trait.
- Lastly, connect it to your own life and how you can apply that trait to become a better person!

Trait	Meaning	Story from Sayyidah Fāṭimah's Life	Application in my Own Life
عابدة ***(ʿĀbidah)***			
مجاحدة ***(Mujāḥidah)***			
Command over her family life			

2.4 The Life of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

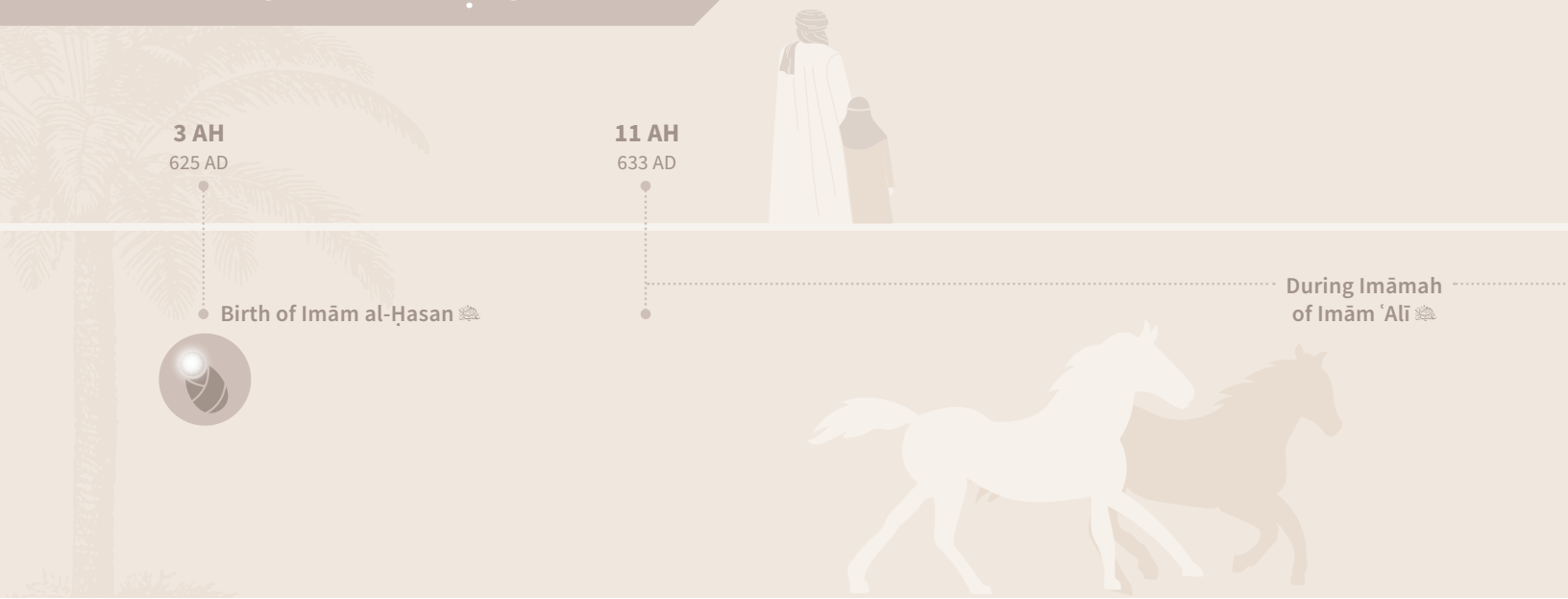
- Demonstrate an understanding of the life of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.
- Summarize the hardships that the Imām ﷺ went through with the caliph.
- Explain the schemes & betrayals against Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.
- Demonstrate how just giving verbal allegiance does not necessarily mean that you are with your Imām ﷺ; and outline what is the true essence of allegiance.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤASAN ﷺ

Name	Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ
Kunyah	Abū Muḥammad
Title	Al-Mujtabā (The Chosen One)
Parents	Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ
Date of Birth	15th of the month of Ramaḍan, 3 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imāmah	10 years
Date of Martyrdom	28th Ṣafar, 50 AH; (7th Ṣafar, based on some scholars)1
Place of Martyrdom	Medina, Arabia
Cause of Martyrdom	Poisoned by his wife Jaʿdah (upon the order of Muʿāwiyah)
Lifespan	47 Years
Location of Grave	Jannatul Baqīʿ in Medina, Arabia

1 Shahīd al-Awwal, *Ad-Durūs ash-Sharʿīyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 7.

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ḤASAN ﷺ



IMĀM ḤASAN ﷺ AS THE CALIPH

In Grade 7, we discussed Imām Ḥasan's birth and early years. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ was 37 years old when he became an Imām ﷺ, upon the martyrdom of his father, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, in the year 40 AH/661 AD, on the 21st of the month of Ramaḍān. That night was extremely difficult for Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ. After performing the funeral rights of their father, they had to dig several false graves as decoys to prevent people from attacking the actual grave of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. Then, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ headed toward Masjid al-Kūfah before *Fajr* time.

Right before the morning (*Fajr*) prayer, people gathered in their thousands to pledge their allegiance to the second Imām ﷺ. According to the historian, Ibn Kathīr, no caliph had ever garnered so many people supporting his appointment to office.[2] People chanted and screamed, promising to support the Imām ﷺ.

Day and night, waves of people came and pledged their allegiance to Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.

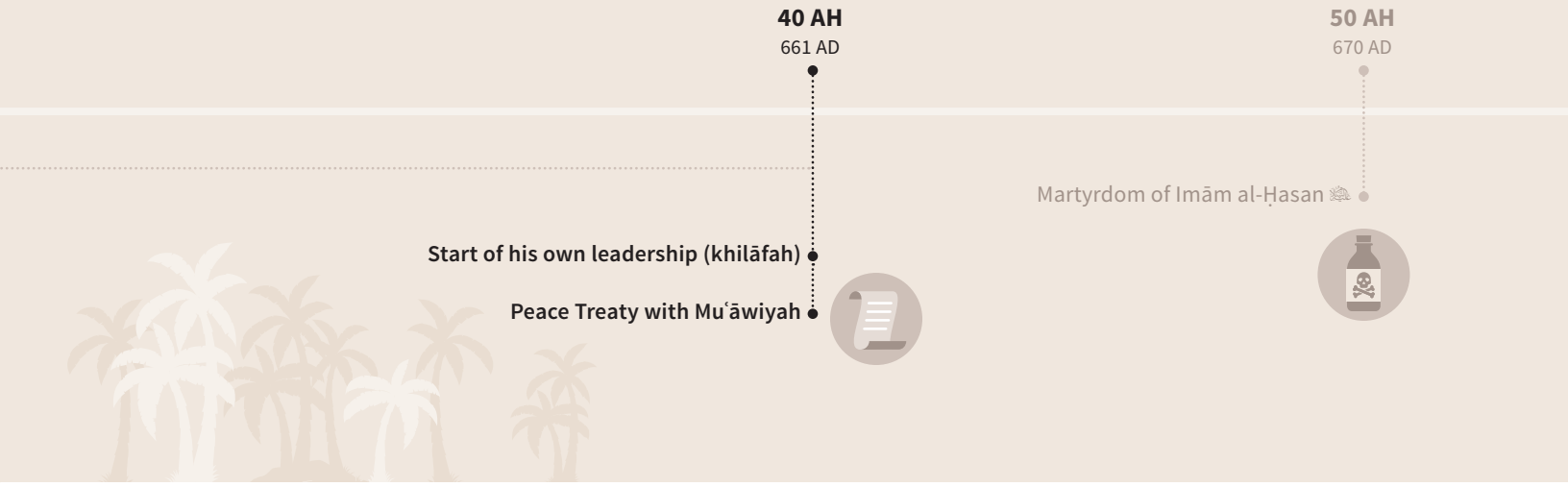
When we look at the lives of our Imāms ﷺ, it is clear that each of them had people who opposed them being leaders. Even as the caliph, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had many people who were against him, and wanted the power for themselves. This is why every Imām ﷺ—except for the 12th Imām عجل الله فرجه—was killed and thus became a martyr *(shahīd)*.

2 Ibn Kathīr Dimishqī, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*, Vol. 8, P. 16.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why was it difficult for the Imāms ﷺ to be in the position of a caliph? Why did people not want them to lead? As a group, create a list of reasons why people rebelled against them. Be prepared to share your findings, and add to your list as other groups present.

Reasons why it would be difficult to be in the position of a caliph:



After the *Fajr* prayers that Imām Ḥasan ﷺ led, he stood up, praised Allah ﷻ, then gave the following speech:

O people! There died tonight a man who was the foremost in good deeds. No one in existence had a greater desire to meet Allah ﷻ than him. He fought alongside the Prophet, and defended him throughout his entire life. The Prophet made him his flag bearer in war, while both Jibrāʾīl and Mikāʾīl were on either side of him, fighting alongside him. He would not return until Allah allowed him to achieve victory. [3]

After his speech, ʿĀbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās came forward and announced:

> "O people! This is the son of the Prophet; and he is the rightful Imām, so pledge your allegiance to him!" [4]

People immediately accepted this call and declared: "No one has a greater right to the caliphate than him!" It is narrated that more than 40,000 people came forward and pledged their allegiance to Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.[5] Once everyone had given their *bayʿah* (an oath of allegiance), the Imām ﷺ appointed commanders and governors to different cities. Despite this widespread verbal allegiance, there were still people who opposed the Imām ﷺ throughout his leadership—both secretly or openly.

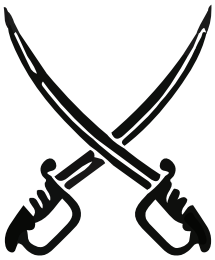
One person who especially opposed the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ during the time of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, then Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, was Muʿāwiyah, the father of Yazīd, who wanted to take this right away from the Imāms ﷺ.

END TO MUʿAWIYAH'S CHAOS

As Muʿāwiyah was wreaking havoc across the Muslim lands, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ—in accordance with the will of his father—publicly stated that the situation of chaos had to end, and that Muʿāwiyah had to be defeated. On the day of Eid, Imām Ḥasan's army had numbered around 60,000 soldiers, while Muʿāwiyah's army had also numbered approximately 60,000 soldiers.

This does not mean that the people's support for Imām Ḥasan ﷺ was for the right reasons. Many people still held grudges against Imām ʿAlī ﷺ because he had defeated them or their friends in previous battles. The first Imām ﷺ was also very straightforward and uncompromising in his ethics and morals, which meant that corrupt people could not get their way with him, nor could he be manipulated in any way. With Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, they had heard many nice narrations from the Prophet ﷺ about him. Plus, given his younger age, they thought that he would be a nice, soft spoken, inexperienced man, and as such, he would be more susceptible to manipulation. They thought that they could easily gain political and financial favors from him. The fact that they disliked Muʿāwiyah increased their preference for Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.

GATHERING AN ARMY TO FIGHT MUʿĀWIYAH



Imām Ḥasan ﷺ appointed seven people to lead his administration against Muʿāwiyah. At the head of Imām Ḥasan's army was ʿUbaydullāh ibn ʿAbbās, the Imām's second cousin.

The Imām ﷺ decided to wait in Kūfah for three days so that the rest of the army could gather together. Meanwhile, he appointed his father's cousin, Ibn ʿAbbās, to be his commander and chief. He sent 12,000 of his best soldiers forward with him. Three days later, the rest of the army followed along with Imām Ḥasan ﷺ to meet ʿUbaydullāh's troops. The army reached a place called Sabat, just before the place where ʿUbaydullāh was stationed. The Imām gave a sermon in the morning, and spoke about having only the best of intentions for the entire Muslim community.

3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 43, P. 361.
4 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 2, Pp. 8-9.
5 Maqrizī, *Imtāʿ al-Asmāʾ*, Vol. 5, P. 358; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Al-Istīʿāb fī Maʿrifat al-Aṣḥāb*, Vol. 1, P. 385.

THE ARMY DESERTS THE IMĀM AND HE IS ATTACKED

After hearing the Imām's sermon, some people interpreted this as Imām Ḥasan wanting to sign a peace treaty with Muʿāwiyah and giving him the caliphate. This was partly due to Muʿāwiyah having sent some agents to spread rumors among the army that the Imām wanted to sign a peace treaty. Some people within the army began calling Imām Ḥasan a disbeliever, and even attacked his tent.[6]

Further rumors also spread among the people after this, and one night panic spread throughout the army. Many of the soldiers began to quickly leave the camp. In the confusion that prevailed, some of the Khawārij, who still had enmity toward the Imāms, attacked Imām Ḥasan's tent and raided it. They even pulled away the carpet from under the Imām's feet.

Imām Ḥasan, while reciting: "Verily there is no power and strength except with Allah," immediately got up, drew his sword, and tried to save himself from the unexpected attack by getting on his horse. He gathered some of his loyal supporters, and attempted to make his way to Madāʾin, where he could have some protection from one of his loyal commanders. Unfortunately though, as the Imām was traveling toward Madāʾin, he became the victim of another assassination attempt. One of the Khawārij named Jarāh ibn Sinān al-Asadī, attacked Imām Ḥasan with a dagger. He inflicted a severe wound upon the Imām. The Imām survived this attack, and with the help of his companions was able to reach Madāʾin, where he eventually recovered from his wounds.

STOP AND REFLECT: Do you think that everyone who claims to love and follow Imām al-Mahdī will be loyal to him when the Major Occultation *(al-Ghaybah al-Kubrā)* ends? Justify your answer through Islamic history.

ʿUBAYDULLĀH'S BETRAYAL

This left the 12,000 soldiers who had gone ahead, under the command of ʿUbaydullāh ibn ʿAbbas. As the troops reached Muʿāwiyah's army, they immediately attacked them. Given his history, ʿUbaydullāh had given no one reason to doubt his loyalty to the Ahlul Bayt. When this group reached the army of Muʿāwiyah, he (Muʿāwiyah) devised a plan to deceive them. He convinced ʿUbaydullāh that the Imām was going to sign a peace treaty with him. He then bribed ʿUbaydullāh with power and money, offering him a large sum of money and a position in his own army. ʿUbaydullāh accepted the bribe, betraying Imām Ḥasan.

Many soldiers followed ʿUbaydullāh in siding with Muʿāwiyah. Some reports indicate that about 8,000 out of the 12,000 switched their allegiance, and now sided with Muʿāwiyah. The remainder of the army was shocked. At this point, a man named Qais ibn Saʿad took over control of this portion of the army—as per the prior command of the Imām. He rallied the troops with an inspirational speech, and was able to resist further attacks from the enemy. He even launched a successful offensive attack against the army of Muʿāwiyah, to the point where Muʿāwiyah began pleading with him to stop the fighting until he heard about the safety of Imām Ḥasan.

6 *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 2, P. 11.

MUʿĀWIYAH'S SCHEME

Imām Ḥasan ﷺ was now in a situation where he had been betrayed by his army, including one of his most trusted commanders. It was not feasible for them to continue to fight against Muʿāwiyah. Continuing the war would mean a huge loss of lives, and the Muslim community may not have survived further fighting. At the same time, the Imām ﷺ knew that Muʿāwiyah was disloyal and had corrupt intentions.

During this time, Muʿāwiyah continued urging the Imām ﷺ to sign a peace treaty. Eventually, he sent a blank sheet to Imām Ḥasan ﷺ which had Muʿāwiyah's seal on it—basically indicating to the Imām ﷺ that he could dictate whatever conditions he wanted for the peace treaty.

THE IMĀM'S DIFFICULT DECISION

Imām Ḥasan ﷺ knew that Muʿāwiyah was unfaithful to his promises, and would never abide by the conditions of a treaty. However, on the other hand, because of what had happened in his own camp and what transpired with ʿUbaydullāh and so many others, he knew that he did not have enough loyal companions to go to war. The Imām ﷺ decided to inform the people; so he addressed them once more by saying:

I swear by Allah, Muʿāwiyah will not give you anything that he is promising you with! Even if I make a treaty with him, he will not be loyal to it; nor will he leave us alone to practice Islam and spread it among society the way my grandfather intended. Muʿāwiyah will continue to oppress the believers. I can see your future, and that of your children to be in a very bad state and difficult conditions. [7]

Having warned the people, and being left with no other reasonable choice, the Imām ﷺ did what his duty was at that time, and agreed to a peace treaty. He did this in order to save the lives of the Muslims, and protect Islam from further damage and distortion.

It is important to understand that Imām Ḥasan ﷺ agreeing to a peace treaty was not a personal choice, nor was it made by his own internal inclinations or personality. Rather, it was by the command of Allah ﷻ, and his duty at that particular time in the situation that the Muslim nation was in.

The Imām ﷺ was brave, and more than willing to fight and struggle against an oppressor like Muʿāwiyah—as he showed when he gathered his army initially, as well as when he fought alongside his father in the Battles of Jamal, Ṣiffīn, and Nahrawān. However, after the betrayal of the army, the duty of the Imām ﷺ at that moment was to sign a peace treaty that would preserve Islam and the Muslims, at least until the event of Karbalāʾ which occurred about 10 years later.

LOYALTY TO OUR IMĀMS ﷺ

One of the major lessons we learn from the life of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ is the importance of loyalty toward our Imāms ﷺ. Many people verbally paid allegiance to the Imām ﷺ, but then they were misled by fear, rumors, grudges, or greed. They disobeyed and even attacked the Imām ﷺ.

We should always keep in mind that no matter what our challenges or difficulties are in this life, we must remain loyal to our Imāms ﷺ and follow their instructions—even in doubtful or strenuous situations.

This also applies to our pious and true scholars *(ʿulamā)*, who are the general representatives of our Imām ﷺ—we should follow their guidelines, and not be affected by doubts or obstacles.

7 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 44, P. 33; Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ*, Vol. 1, P. 220.

Activity 2.4a: Review Questions

1. Find verse 46 of Sūrah al-Anfāl from the Qurʾān and write down the translation of it. Why do you think Imām Ḥasan ﷺ recited this verse when he was inviting the people to stand up against Muʿāwiyah? What was he trying to tell them?

2. What tactics did Muʿāwiyah use to turn the people against Imām Ḥasan ﷺ?

3. Why did the army of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ become demoralized?

Activity 2.4a: Review Questions (continued)

4. Why did Imām Ḥasan ﷺ have no choice but to sign a peace treaty with Muʿāwiyah?

5. Research and find the conditions of the treaty that Imām Ḥasan ﷺ had to sign. List some of them.

Activity 2.4b: Case Study

The following is the definition of 'betray' from Merriam Webster's Dictionary:

betray /bi-'trā/

1. to lead astray

2. to deliver to an enemy by treachery

3. to fail or desert especially in time of need

4. (point 4 has 3 parts which are:)

a) to reveal unintentionally
b) to show, indicate
c) to disclose in violation of confidence

1. Which of these definitions above are the closest to the way in which Imām Ḥasan's army acted toward him?

Note: If a believer makes you feel betrayed, then it is important to give them many excuses before taking things personally. However, when it comes to Islam and defending the truth, we need to make sure that we align our hearts and minds with those who will not betray Allah ﷻ, and that our intentions match our actions.

2. Think of a time when you have felt betrayed in this way. How did you address the situation? How did it shape your view of the person or people who made you feel this way?

2.5 Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ: The Necessity of a Just Leader

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the circumstances that the Shīʿahs had to live through during the caliphate of Muʿāwiyah—both during the time of and after the death of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.
- Outline the strategy of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ for showing opposition to Muʿāwiyah while maintaining the tenets of the peace treaty that his brother had signed.
- Explain how Yazīd was a corrupt and unjust ruler, and why following just leaders is very important and crucial.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤUSAYN ﷺ

Name	Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ
Kunyah	Abū ʿAbdillāh
Title	Sayyid ash-Shuhadāʾ
Parents	Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ
Date of Birth	3rd Shaʿbān 4 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imāmah	10 years
Date of Martyrdom	10th Muḥarram 61 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Karbalāʾ, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Beheaded on the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ
Lifespan	57 years
Location of Shrine	Karbalāʾ, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ḤUSAYN ﷺ

4 AH
626 AD

Birth of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ

11 AH
634 AD

Riḥlah of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

During Imāmah of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ

In the previous grade, we covered the birth of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and his early years during the lifetime of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and his father, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. We also discussed how Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ supported his brother, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ throughout his entire life. When Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ became the Divinely-appointed leader upon the martyrdom of his brother, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, the staunch enemy of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—Muʿāwiyah—was still in power.

MARTYRDOM OF IMĀM ḤASAN ﷺ TO DEPARTURE FROM MEDINA

When Imām Ḥasan ﷺ was killed, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was the only member of the People of the Cloak *(Ahlul Kisāʾ)* who now remained alive. He was tasked with burying the body of his brother in Jannatul Baqīʿ at night, and was now ready to carry out his responsibilities as the next Imām ﷺ. Even after the martyrdom of his brother (who was killed by the orders of Muʿāwiyah), he still respected the peace treaty that Imām Ḥasan ﷺ had signed with Muʿāwiyah for 9 ½ years (until the death of Muʿāwiyah).

CONDITION OF THE SHĪʿAHS DURING MUʿĀWIYAH'S CALIPHATE

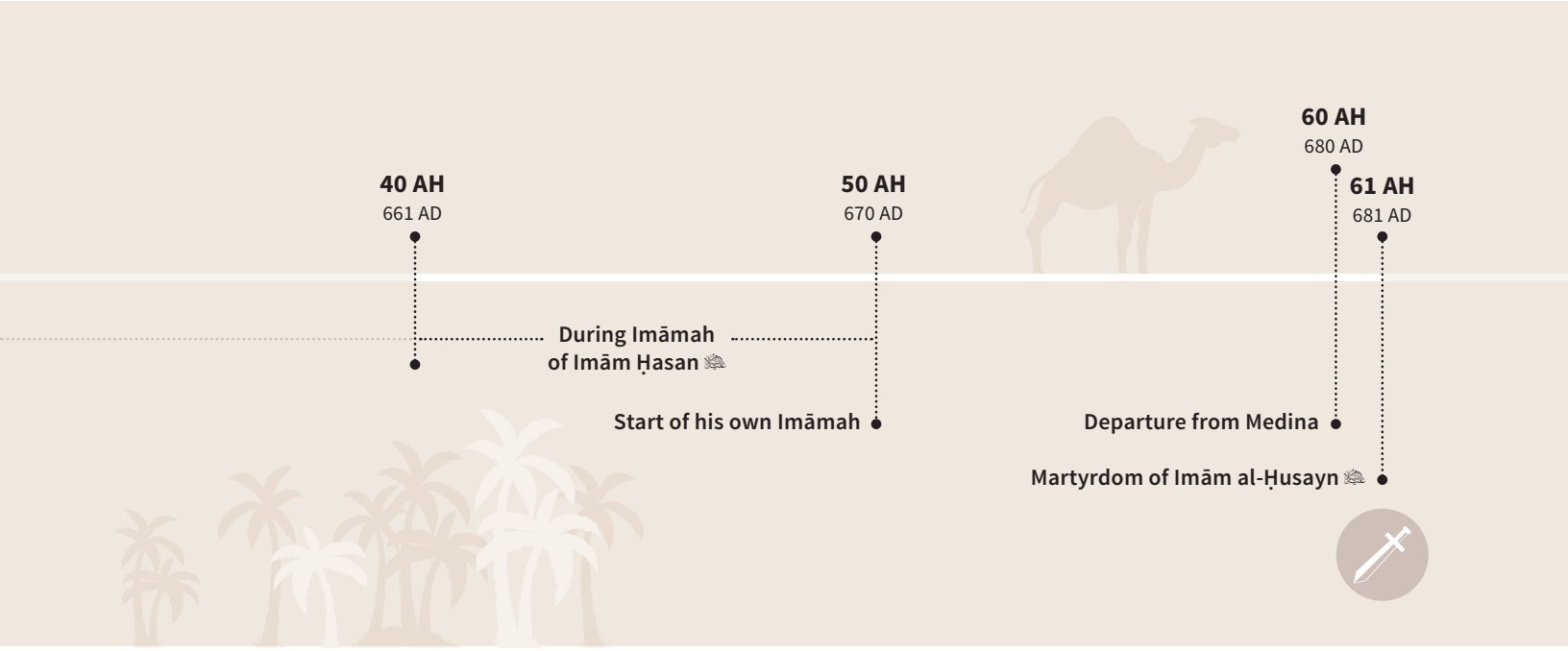
The tragedy of Karbalāʾ was not an overnight occurrence. It is incredible to think that just 50 years after the demise of the Noble Prophet ﷺ of Islam—who was a mercy to all of humankind—the Muslims had become so deviated that they had the audacity to massacre the beloved family of the Prophet in the manner that they did!

The political climate after the death of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ was very dangerous for the Shīʿahs. To better understand just how evil Muʿāwiyah was, and the challenges that the subsequent Imāms ﷺ had in front of them, one must analyze his character in depth. We spoke a bit about this in the previous lesson on Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.

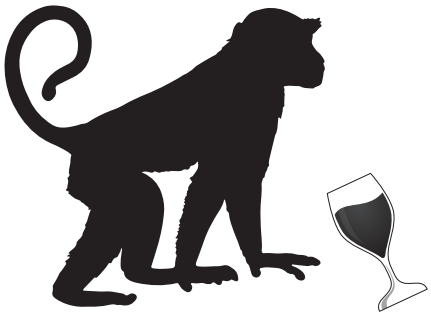
STOP AND REFLECT: Recall some ways in which Muʿāwiyah was ill-mannered and corrupt.

Behind closed doors, Muʿāwiyah would drink excessively. When people joined him for a meal, he would always order alcohol to be brought in. Many practicing Muslims refused to eat with him.

Despite being "the leader of the Muslims," Muʿāwiyah blatantly violated many other sacred laws of Islam. For example, he charged interest on loans and even cheated people. He issued judgments based on whatever he felt, not on the laws of Allah ﷻ. Perhaps amongst his most famous and obvious transgressions was that he offered *Ṣalātul Jumuʿah* (the Friday Prayers) on a Wednesday! The people were so obedient to him that they followed him without raising any objection! This was because Muʿāwiyah was very cunning and an excellent manipulator.



As Muʿāwiyah aged, he knew that it was time for him to start thinking of a successor, but the question was who? He could not really appoint his son, Yazīd, because the people would never accept him due to how Yazīd used to act. Or would they? To understand just how problematic it would be for Yazīd to be the next caliph, we must first understand how problematic Yazīd truly was.



Just like his father and grandfather, Yazīd was rough, harsh, and hard-hearted. He enjoyed watching people and animals suffer. He was extremely extravagant. He used to dress his dogs up in golden collars and bracelets. He was also very eccentric. He named his monkey Abū Qays, and would give him the last sips of his alcohol. The worst quality of Yazīd was that he was **openly** a disbeliever. At the very least, Muʿāwiyah concealed his lack of faith and pretended to be a believer. However, Yazīd openly stated that he did not believe in Islam or its principles. Additionally, he took part in impermissible music and singing *(ghinā')*, and made no efforts to conceal his interest in women, to the point that during a battle while his army would be fighting, he would go to the nearby villages and have relations with the women.

Yazīd was openly a disbeliever

STOP AND REFLECT: Imagine if the leader of a religious group does not believe in, nor follow that religion. What would happen to the followers of that religion?

FĀSIQ:
a corrupt, open sinner

Muʿāwiyah wrote letters to his governors, instructing them to get the allegiance from influential personalities. By the year 56 AH, Muʿāwiyah had managed to gather allegiance from a number of them, mostly due to the fact that he had created such a fearful environment that most people gave in to his commands without much hesitation. In Medina, everyone accepted and gave allegiance, except four people: ʿAbdur Rahmān ibn Abī Bakr, ʿAbdullāh ibn Zubayr, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, and of course, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ. When Muʿāwiyah learned about their denial, he became angry, but before responding, he wanted to get the allegiance from the people of Iraq and Damascus.

PREPARING YAZĪD FOR THE CALIPHATE

Due to his extreme and unconditional love for Yazīd, Muʿāwiyah did everything he could to make Yazīd the next caliph. He instructed his governors to praise Yazīd and send their representatives to Damascus. Soon, people began coming to Damascus from all different cities. Muʿāwiyah told one of his advisors: "I will start talking about Yazīd, then you make allegiance to him, and encourage me to do so as well." His advisor did as he was told, and soon all of the people followed and also gave their allegiance to Yazīd.

Another common tactic which Muʿāwiyah used was threatening, terrorism, and even killing the opposition. He would instill so much fear in people that they could not even think about turning against him. Thousands of people were burned alive and killed in Yemen, and other places. Several others were murdered, including famous companions such as Maytham at-Tammār, and Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī.

It was through these strategies that Muʿāwiyah managed to secure the allegiance of the people of Iraq and Damascus for a corrupt, open sinner *(fāsiq)* like Yazīd. After this, he decided it was time to direct his attention toward the four men in Medina who had refused to pay their allegiance.

THE STRATEGY OF IMĀM ḤUSAYN ﷺ

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, while respecting the peace treaty, was openly critical of Muʾāwiyah's unjust government.

One time, some government funds were being taken from Yemen to Syria where Muʻāwiyah was. As the caravan taking these funds passed by the city of Medina, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ—given the authority that he possessed as the rightful Imām—confiscated these funds and divided them in a just manner among the rightful people.

Then he wrote the following to Muʻāwiyah: "A caravan from Yemen passed by us carrying wealth, cloth,… and perfume to you so that you could store it in the treasuries of Damascus. With it, you planned to increase the wealth of your family, when they have already taken enough from the government funds." [1]

Muʻāwiyah was so enraged by this action that he wrote a harsh letter in response to the Imām ﷺ. In this manner, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ bravely showed everyone the illegitimacy of Muʻāwiyah's government.

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was also working diligently to improve the Muslim society through education. He wanted to mentor individuals to become his core supporters. Whenever people came from near or far, he would teach them about topics such as: Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*, Prophethood *(Nubūwwah)*, Resurrection and the Day of Judgment *(Maʿād)*, and self-building.

One time, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ said: "I asked my father about how the Messenger of Allah used to spend his time at home? He replied: 'The Prophet used to divide his time at home into three parts: one part for Allah, one part for his family, and one part for himself. Then, he would divide the time for himself into two parts: one part for the nation, and one part for himself.'" [2]

STOP AND REFLECT: Start to think about how we can apply this lesson in our daily lives, especially in forming long-term healthy habits.

Many Muslims, especially those living in Mecca and Medina, were still politically conscious and desired to see the restoration of the Islamic laws and values. Although Mu'āwiyah tried his best to buy allegiance for his son from his armys' commanders, tribal chiefs and chieftains, and entire tribes, as well as men of distinction and influence, by spending huge sums of money in the process; however, his efforts did not succeed with some influential Muslims outside of Damascus.

1 Sharīf al-Qurashī, *Ḥayāt al-Imām Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī*, Vol. 2, P. 231; Ustād Mahdī Pīshvāʾī, *Sīre Pīshvāyān*, Pp. 160-161.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 4, P. 150.

MUʿĀWIYAH'S DEATH

Even though Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 openly spoke out against Muʿāwiyah's caliphate, he did not think it was advisable for the Shīʿahs to fight Muʿāwiyah and his army at that particular time. In the year 60 AH, Muʿāwiyah died from an illness.

When Yazīd became the caliph, his only obstacle to power were those who had rejected his leadership, especially Imām Ḥusayn 🕋. So he wrote a letter to Walīd ibn ʿUtbah, the governor of Medina, informing him of his father's death, and commanding him to obtain the allegiance from the four people who had not yet given it. He specified: "If they refuse, then kill them, and send their heads to me." [3]

Walīd received this letter in the middle of the night, and upon reading its contents, he became extremely anxious and uncomfortable. Walīd tried to get the allegiance first by inviting the Imām 🕋 to his palace. The Imām 🕋 asked some of the people from his family (the Banī Hāshim) to accompany him, just in case. He told them that when they arrive, only he will enter the palace, and asked the Banī Hāshim to stay outside. There was a discussion between Walīd, Marwān, and Imām Ḥusayn 🕋. The Imām 🕋 told them: "Come to me in the morning. That way you will have time to think, and so will we." [4] However, Marwān did not agree to this and started to threaten the Imām 🕋. Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 raised his voice and the Banī Hāshim came in at once and took the Imām 🕋 away from there. The next morning, Marwān saw Imām Ḥusayn 🕋, and tried to advise him again.

That night, which was the 28th of Rajab, the Imām 🕋 decided to leave Medina, along with his family. However, before leaving Medina, for the last time, he visited the grave of his mother and grandfather.

He said the following at the grave of his grandfather: "O my Lord! This is the grave of Your Prophet, Muḥammad, and I am the son of his daughter; and You know best what is happening to me. I do not want anything but to enjoin the good *(amr bil maʿrūf)* and forbid the evil *(nahy ʿanil munkar)*. I ask You, by the right of this grave, that you choose for me what pleases You." [5]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why did Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 often recite and speak his *duʿās* out loud?

In his final will, Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 stated the purpose of his mission as follows:

> "Indeed, my movement is not evil, reckless, mischievous, or unjust. I wish to reform what is wrong in the nation of my father, enjoin the good, forbid the evil, and follow the tradition of my grandfather and father…" [6]

IMĀM ḤUSAYN'S CHARACTERISTICS

In contrast to Muʿāwiyah and Yazīd's corrupt characteristics, our Imāms 🕋 always had the best of morals and etiquettes *(akhlāq),* and submitted totally to the commands of Allah ﷻ. Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 wished to serve Allah ﷻ by helping the Muslim nation. He did not ever hoard wealth or oppress others, God forbid.

Many people saw Imām ʿAlī 🕋, Imām Ḥasan 🕋, and Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 as ideal rulers because they were not financially corrupt, nor deviated in any way; and economic prosperity followed them wherever they ruled. However, they did not view them as Divinely-appointed Imāms, but felt that they were the ideal rulers for fulfilling their worldly desires.

There was a very small group of truly loyal companions who moved to Kūfah during the caliphate of Imām ʿAlī 🕋 out of love and religious devotion to the Ahlul Bayt 🕋. Those who then turned to Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 were known as the Shīʿahs. But the term here is tricky. The term "Shīʿah" back then—especially in the context of the Kūfans—referred to those people who wanted Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 to govern Kūfah. Although some of them were sincere and faithful Shīʿahs, there were those who supported the first three caliphs, namely Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān, and who now supported Imām Ḥusayn 🕋, but only as long as it was in their worldly interests to do so.[7]

3 Taken from the Translation of *Maqtal al-Muqarram* which was written by ʿAbdur Razzaq Muqarram, P. 39.
4 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 2, P. 32.
5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 44, P. 328.
6 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 44, P. 329.
7 Jafri, S. M., *The Origins and Early Development of Shia Islam*.

CAN WE FOLLOW AN UNJUST RULER AND STILL PRACTICE OUR OWN BELIEFS?

The personality of the leader of a nation will have a great impact on the people, and can subtly influence their faith over time. That is why Allah ﷻ sent numerous Prophets ﷺ who were righteous, just, and perfect individuals over time, in order to guide humankind and eradicate oppression.[8]

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ knew his role as a Divinely-appointed leader and guide for all of humanity. He wanted the people to wake up from their misguidance, and encourage them to take action against tyranny and a corrupt leader. That is why he reminded them about what his grandfather had ordered:

> *Surely you know that the Prophet said: 'Whoever witnesses a tyrant ruler who considers the prohibitions of Allah as permissible, violates the covenant of Allah, opposes the practices of the Prophet of Allah, treats the servants of Allah sinfully and cruelly, and does not oppose him verbally or physically, Allah will associate them with that (tyrant) ruler.'* [9]

CONCLUSION

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, as the rightful leader and Divinely-appointed Imām, deserved the position of the caliphate. This right was denied to him just as it was denied to the Imāms ﷺ before him. After the death of his brother, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ showed people the injustice of Muʿāwiyah's government, and refused to pledge allegiance to the next-in-line appointed, corrupt ruler: Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiyah. In the next grade, we will learn how this refusal culminated in a battle on the plains of Karbalāʾ, a tragic event in which the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ were killed, oppressed, tortured, and treated in the most undignified manner.

8 Prophet Mūsā ﷺ is mentioned many times throughout the Qurʾān. One of his main missions was to fight against Firʿawn, who was the tyrannical ruler of his time. Through the actions of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, Allah ﷻ teaches humankind not to voluntarily accept unjust rulers. In his uprising against Firʿawn, there is a fundamental lesson. Allah ﷻ would not mention this story in the Qurʾān repeatedly, and with so much detail, merely for the sake of entertainment.

9 *Biḥar al-Anwār*, Vol. 44, P. 382; Āyatullāḥ ʿAlī Miyanaji, *Makātīb al-Aʾimmah*, Vol. 3, P. 143.

Activity 2.5a: Review Questions

1. Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 rose up against the tyrants of his time because:
   a. He wanted to establish justice
   b. He wanted to re-establish the true teachings of Islam
   c. Both of the above

2. The revolution of Imām Ḥusayn 🕋:
   a. Had no real effect on the Muslim world
   b. Revived the Muslims and led to many other revolutions
   c. We are unsure of the outcomes of it

3. Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 did not pay allegiance to Yazīd because:
   a. He was an open sinner and an unjust ruler
   b. He did not like his family
   c. He was the son of Muʿāwiyah

Activity 2.5b: Historical Figures

The trials and difficulties that Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 went through are not only lessons for the Shīʿahs. His love for Allah ﷻ and fighting oppression serves as an inspiration for all of humankind. There are numerous non-Muslim individuals in history who have used Imām Ḥusayn's strength in the events of Karbalāʾ as an example for themselves.

Research one non-Muslim historical figure who was inspired by the actions of Imām Ḥusayn 🕋, and write a short essay on what oppression they fought and how. What parts of their journey were specifically inspired by our Imām 🕋?

2.6 Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ: A Wise Exemplar

OBJECTIVES

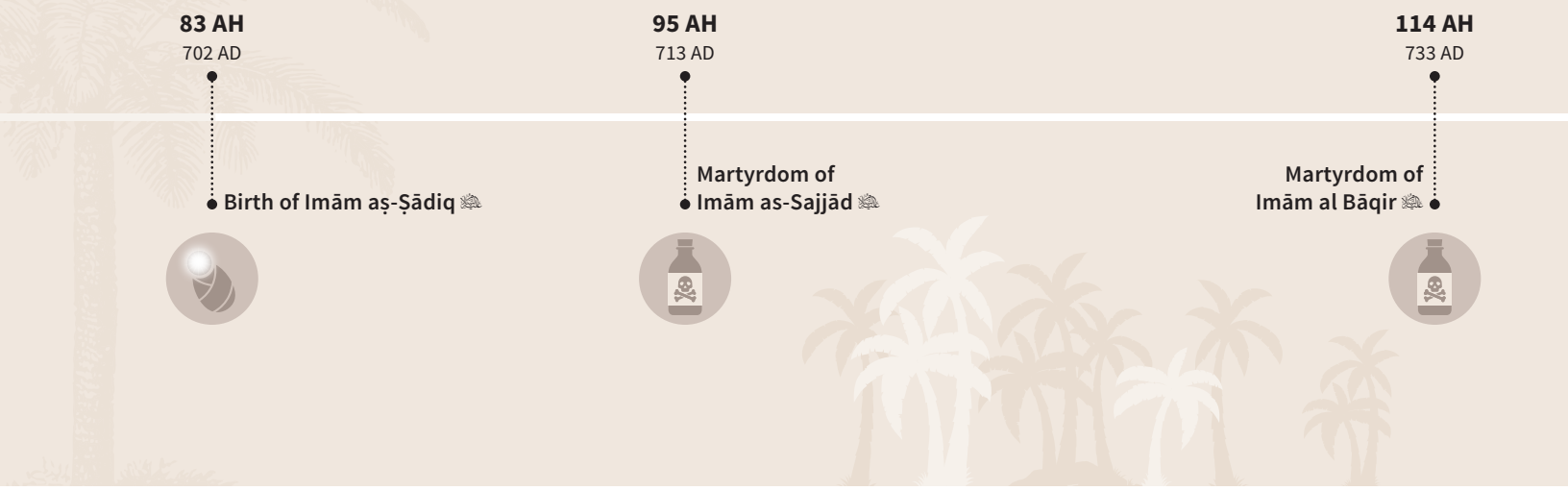
WE WILL:

- Understand the historical and social context during the time of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.
- Learn some of the different characteristics of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.
- Look at some of the wisdoms of the 6th Imām ﷺ.
- Learn about various companions of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.
- Demonstrate an understanding of deep cognizance *(maʿrifah)*.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM AṢ-ṢĀDIQ ﷺ

Name	Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ﷺ
Kunyah	Abū ʿAbdillah
Title	aṣ-Ṣādiq
Parents	Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ and Lady Umm Farwah
Date of Birth	17th Rabīʿ al-Awwal 83 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imāmah	34 years
Date of Martyrdom	25th Shawwāl 148 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Medina, Arabia
Cause of Martyrdom	Poisoned
Lifespan	65 years
Location of Grave	Jannatul Baqīʿin Medina, Arabia

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AṢ-ṢĀDIQ ﷺ



All of our Imāms ﷺ aimed to guide the Shīʿahs in whatever way they could. However, most of them were silenced by the oppressive regimes of the time and could not publicly teach the religion. On the other hand, the Shīʿahs during the times of our Imāms ﷺ still had the responsibility of learning their religion and gaining true knowledge. This can only be done when you receive guidance from the correct sources. We have examples of several companions of different Imāms ﷺ who went through extreme hardships to learn the religion. It is only through their struggles that we have access to the history and narrations that we have today.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's efforts were instrumental in ensuring that the knowledge of Allah ﷻ and Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ reached everyone—from the people of that time up until us today.

We need to revisit the topic of *nūrun wāḥid*—one light—when discussing the phenomenal success of our beloved 6th Imām ﷺ. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is considered to be the master of all of the teachers of Islamic knowledge, and the Shīʿahs of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ flourished during his Imamate. In fact, our school of thought is called the 'Jaʿfari School of Thought' because of the fact that Shīʿah Jurisprudence *(Fiqh)* was established during his time. Does this mean that Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had more knowledge or was closer to Allāh ﷻ than the previous Imāms ﷺ? This is certainly not the case, and the concept of *nūrun wāḥid* explains this. One of the main differences between our 6th Imām ﷺ and the rest of the Imāms ﷺ was that the political climate and circumstances of his time allowed him to freely spread knowledge without the oppression of the government, unlike many of our other Imāms ﷺ.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ lived during a transition period between two dynasties. The gap between the Umayyad dynasty and the ʿAbbāsid dynasty opened the way for the propagation of Shīʿah ideology and school of thought. This was when Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ took maximum advantage of the opportunity, and managed to spread the teachings of Shīʿah Islam in a way that made it reachable to people around the world.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was born in Medina, in the year 83 AH (702 AD). He has the same birthday as the final Prophet ﷺ, which is the 17th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was martyred in Shawwāl in the year 148 AH (767 AD) at the age of 65. He is buried in the cemetery of al-Baqīʿ in Medina, alongside his father, his grandfather, and Imām Ḥasan ﷺ. His *Imāmah* lasted for about 34 years.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was brought up in the care of his grandfather, Imām Zaynul ʿĀbidīn ﷺ, for around 12 years; then had the guidance of his father, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ, for another 19 years.

THE CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF IMĀM AṢ-ṢĀDIQ ﷺ

After the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, the government of the Bani Umayyah was shaken. The people had animosity toward the Umayyads and no longer had hope in their government. This created a perfect atmosphere for uprisings. There were many uprisings—one after another—with multiple groups attempting to remove the Umayyads from power. Some of these uprisings were done with honest intentions, and the leaders of these uprisings wanted to hand power over to the Imāms ﷺ. Others however—without true understanding and awareness *(maʿrifah)* of the Divinely-appointed leaders—were rebelling against the government with their own self-interest, or without a clear intention of who would rule after the government was overthrown.

The final uprisings were led by members of the ʿAbbāsid family, who were descendents of ʿAbbās, the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ. These people claimed to be taking revenge for the atrocities committed against Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ in Karbalāʾ; and took advantage of the popularity of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. They even made their slogan to stand and protect the rights of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. However, when they came to power and destroyed the Umayyads, they turned against the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. They simply wanted power, and became successful in attaining it. In 132 AH (750 AD), the ʿAbbāsid family appointed a caliph, and became the rulers of the Muslim empire.

The Imām ﷺ was responsible for organizing the *Fiqh* (Jurisprudential Laws) of the Shīʿah faith. Many students from foreign countries came to learn from the Imām ﷺ. His classes produced approximately 4,000 scholars who specialized in *Ḥadīth* (Narrations), *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), *ʿAqāʾid* (Beliefs), and several other sciences. Some of his famous students include: Hisham ibn al-Ḥakam, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, and Jābir ibn Ḥayyan.

In spite of all of the atrocities against the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ went on propagating the teachings of the Islam. As a result, even those who did not acknowledge him as an immaculate Imām ﷺ, bowed before his knowledge, and were proud of being counted among his students.

STOP AND REFLECT: What does it say about the character and knowledge of this Imām ﷺ that even those who did not see him as immaculate wanted to be his students?

Manṣūr, the ʿAbbāsid Caliph, wanted to remove the esteem in which the Imām ﷺ was held by the people. He tried to bring "scholars" to compete with him, but all of them proved incapable of arguing and succeeding even with the Imām's students, let alone the Imām ﷺ himself. The arrogant caliph continued to try and undermine the popularity and respect of the Imām ﷺ by other means. However, people continued to respect and learn from the Imām ﷺ. So, Manṣūr decided to harass, arrest, and even murder the Imām ﷺ. In every city, he hired agents to spy on the activities of the followers of the Imām ﷺ. The government declared that anyone who was found supporting the Imām ﷺ would be arrested or killed.

THE WISDOM OF THE IMĀM

At this time, with a great number of followers, many companions and friends of the Imām asked him to begin a revolution against the government. However, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq knew that he did not have enough genuine followers to start a revolution, and doing so would just injure Islam.

As an example, once a man from Khurāsān (located in modern-day Iran), by the name of Sahl ibn Ḥasan, came to the Imām and asked him why he did not fight for his right when there were so many Shīʿahs in Khurāsān ready to fight alongside with him. In response, the Imām took Sahl and told him to walk into a burning furnace. Sahl began to tremble and said that he had a family to return to, and begged to be excused from this test.

Meanwhile, Hārūn al-Makki, a close companion of the 6th Imām, arrived, having just returned from *Ḥajj*. The Imām asked him to jump into the fire. Hārūn did so at once, without questioning or any hesitation. After a while, the Imām asked Sahl to look in the furnace, and Sahl saw that Hārūn was sitting there, completely unharmed and in total ease. The Imām asked Sahl how many such followers [like Harūn] were there in Khurāsān, to which the man replied: "None, O master." Having made his point, the Imām asked Hārūn to come out of the furnace.[1]

Activity 2.6a: Quick Write

Think about the questions below before writing down your thoughts.

Why was it so important to have followers like Hārūn al-Makki before starting a revolution? How was he like the followers of Imām Ḥusayn in Karbalāʾ?

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 47, P. 123.

SOME OF THE COMPANIONS OF THE 6TH IMĀM

Abū Baṣīr

Yaḥyā ibn Abul Qāsim al-Asadī was a reliable companion of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq, and was given the title of Abū Baṣīr, which literally means the 'father of insight/vision,' despite being a blind man. He was called Abū Baṣīr because he saw miraculous actions from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq. For example, sometimes the Imām would rub his hand on the eyes of Abū Baṣīr, and he could see.[2] Abū Baṣīr is among the great traditionalists and jurisprudents. He was also among the closest companions of the 5th Imām, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir.

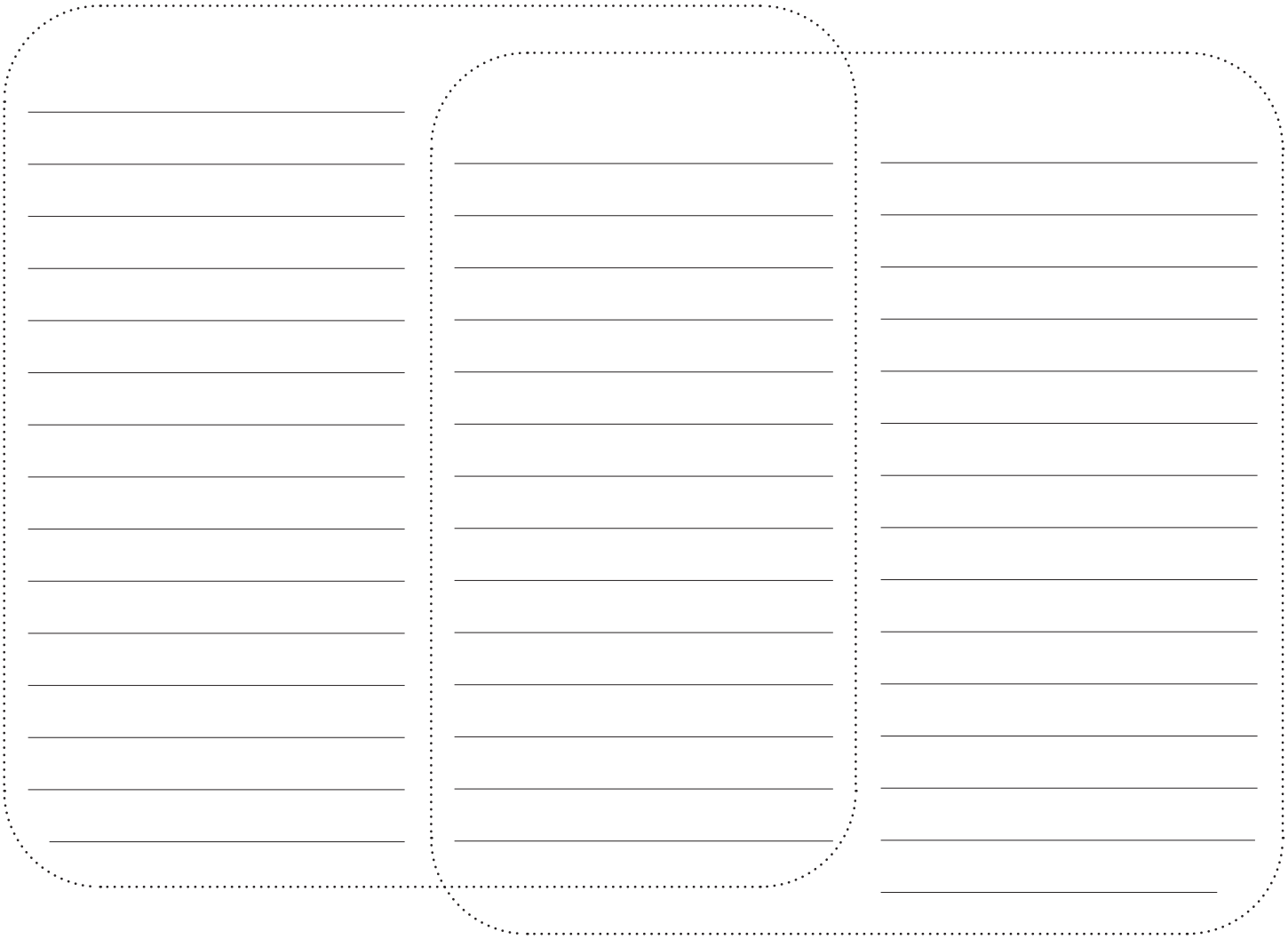
Muḥammad ibn Muslim

Muḥammad ibn Muslim ath-Thaqafī reported traditions on the authority of the Imāms. He lived during the time of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq, and was a model of righteousness. He obeyed the orders of his Imāms and followed their behavior. He was very trustworthy as well. Even those who disagreed with his beliefs acknowledged his purity and righteousness. He reported many authentic traditions from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq, and was considered the leading jurist at a time when people were highly knowledgeable in Jurisprudence.

2 Aṭ-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, *Dalāʾil al-Imāmah*, Vol. 1, P. 282.

Activity 2.6b: Venn Diagram

Complete a venn diagram of the two companions mentioned in this section. Once completed, then answer the questions below.



1. What are some common traits amongst the companions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ?

2. How can we exemplify these traits in our own lives?

MANNERS (AKHLĀQ) OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

A deep thirst for knowledge appeared in Islamic society during the times of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ and Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ because of the following reasons:

1. **Intellectual Freedom:** The freedom which Islam promotes for intellectual thinking and development was recognized, and [to an extent] promoted by the government of the time.
2. **Understanding the Importance of Gaining Knowledge:** The encouragements of the Prophet ﷺ in gaining knowledge were being implemented, as well as the emphasis and invitation of the Qurʾān toward knowledge, learning, reasoning, and reflection were the foundational causes of this movement.
3. **Diverse Communities of Muslims:** Muslims from many different ethnic backgrounds were trying to deeply understand the teachings of Islam. They engaged in research, and the exchange of opinions and viewpoints.
4. **Peaceful Coexistence with non-Muslims:** This was particularly with the People of the Book *(Ahlul Kitāb)*. Muslims believed in tolerance and coexistence with other people, and they did not consider this as being counter to their religious teachings. The *Ahlul Kitāb* had scholarly and learned groups. The Muslims would have dialogues with them, and this would bring about debates, discussions, and reflection.

Activity 2.6c: Current Events

Consider the reasons mentioned above that caused a deep thirst for knowledge during the time of the 5th and 6th Imāms ﷺ. What are current examples of these that demonstrate why we must continue to gain knowledge and maintain their validity—specifically regarding the knowledge of Islam? Fill out the table below.

REASONS	CURRENT EXAMPLES OF WHY THESE REASONS ARE STILL VALID
Intellectual Freedom	
Understanding the Importance of Gaining Knowledge	
Diverse Communities of Muslims	
Peaceful Coexistence with non-Muslims	

The spread of knowledge at that time had kindled the spirit of debate and inquiry, and philosophical debates and discussions spread to all circles. Many people were well aware that Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 was the best person to learn from. He was an active researcher, and an amazing thinker who was well aware of the sciences of his time. During his lifetime, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 had a total of 4,000 students. A group of them compiled intellectual works, and had a large number of their own students. For example, Hisham ibn al-Ḥakam wrote 31 books.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 would encourage and teach each of his individual students according to whichever field they had a natural talent and passion for. Students, for the first time since the death of the Prophet ﷺ, openly specialized and spread knowledge in different Islamic Sciences, such as Transmitted Knowledge *(Al-ʿUlūm an-Naqliyyah)*, Intellectual Knowledge *(Al-ʿUlūm al-ʿAqlīyyah)*, and Natural Sciences *(Al-ʿUlūm at-Tabiʿīyyah)*. Some of those who attended the 6th Imām's classes went on to later establish their own Jurisprudential Schools of Thought.

STOP AND REFLECT: Is having true understanding and awareness *(maʿrifah)* of your teacher necessary to learn Islamic knowledge from them?

Despite Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's contributions toward intellectual and spiritual progress, the rulers of the time, namely Abūl ʿAbbas as-Saffāḥ, and Mansūr ad-Dawaniqī, stopped the 6th Imām 🕌 from doing *tablīgh* (propagation). They put him under house arrest to create fear in the hearts of those who wanted to follow these Divine guides.

Many of the people who Sunnīs take their *Fiqh* from today, including Abū Hanīfah and Mālik ibn Anas studied under Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 and Imām al-Bāqir 🕌, although they did not believe in them as Divine leaders. So we see that even people who are not aware of the status of their teachers often still go to the best source to seek knowledge. Therefore we, as people who understand the status of our Imāms 🕌, must strive to learn from their teachings, and then apply them in our lives.

Practically, this can be difficult without effort on our part. We need to learn about the lives of our Imāms 🕌, their teachings, and their manners, so that we can attain this knowledge from those who are the most qualified to teach Islam during the occultation of our present Imām 🕌.

One day, a man came to see the Noble Prophet ﷺ and asked him: "What action holds the highest merit?" The Prophet repeated twice: "Knowledge of Allah, and knowing His religion." The man said: "O Prophet of Allah, I asked about an action, but your answer is about knowledge?" The Prophet replied:

> "A small amount of actions are highly beneficial if they are with knowledge, whereas lots of actions with no knowledge are useless." [3]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is knowledge regarded with such high merit?
What does it mean to act on our knowledge?

Our beloved 6th Imām 🕌 devoted his entire life to religious propagation and spreading the teachings of our Noble Prophet ﷺ. ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī narrates that the number of traditions preserved by the 5th and 6th Imāms 🕌 is more than those which have been recorded from the Prophet ﷺ and the other ten Imāms 🕌 combined. It is undeniable that many of the great scholars of Islam and all of humanity are indebted to the knowledge provided by Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌. Inshāʾallāh, through this knowledge, we are able to recognize the characteristics of being true believers, and grow in our love of the Ahlul Bayt 🕌.

3 Āmidī, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 500.

Activity 2.6d: Review Questions

1. Why did the 6th Imām ﷺ not begin a revolution against the government of his time during his Imamate?

2. What was the biggest difference between the period of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's Imamate, and many of the other Imāms ﷺ that allowed him to be more free and able to share the knowledge and teachings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the previous Imāms ﷺ?

3. **Personal Reflection:** This lesson mentions that as people who understand the status of our Imāms ﷺ, we should strive to learn from their teachings. What is something you already do to learn about the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ? What is something you wish you did more of to help you strengthen your faith? Think of 2-3 specific things that you can incorporate into your daily life.

2.7 The Life of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

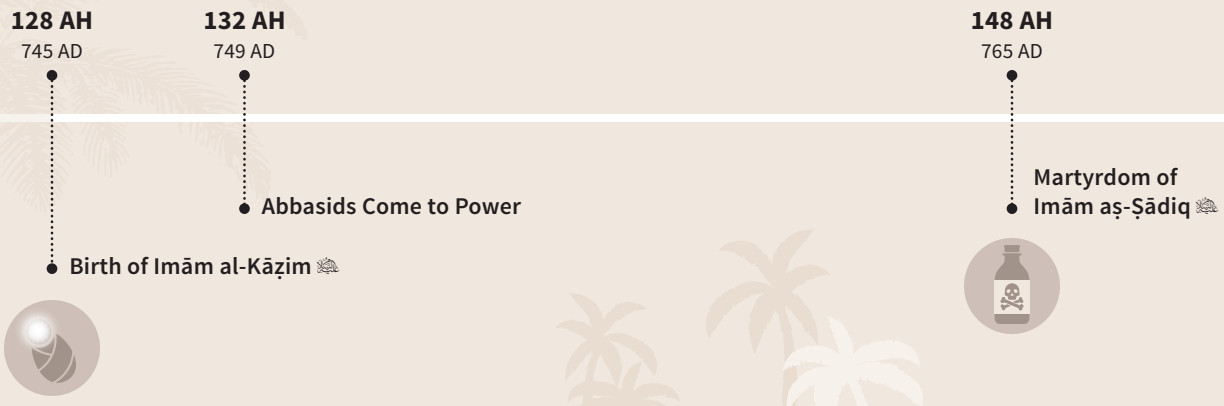
WE WILL:

- Understand different traits and characteristics of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ.
- Explain how to use those traits for the benefit of others.
- Comprehend historical events at the time of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of a leader within communities.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM AL-KĀẒIM ﷺ

Name	Musā ibn Jaʿfar ﷺ
Kunyah	Abūl Ḥasan
Title	Al-Kāẓim, Bāb ul-Ḥawāij
Parents	Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ and Lady Ḥamīdah
Date of Birth	7th of Safar 128 AH, or 20th Dhul Ḥijjah
Birthplace	Abwāʾ, near Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imāmah	35 years
Date of Martyrdom	25th of Rajab 183 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Baghdād, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Poisoned by Sindī, upon the order of Hārūn ar-Rashīd
Lifespan	55 years
Location of Grave	Kāẓimayn, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-KĀẒIM ﷺ



Our 7th righteous Imām is Imām Musā al-Kāẓim ﷺ. He was known by both his friends and enemies as *al-Kāẓim*—which means 'a person who contains one's own anger.' He was also known for treating others justly. While we learn about the life of this Imām ﷺ, we also want to reflect on how we can model his actions.

AL-KĀẒIM: a person who controls or swallows one's anger and has great patience

The Qur'ān describes the actions of the *muttaqīn*—the people of *taqwā*, God-consciousness—as follows:

...the Godwary (are) those who spend (in the cause of Allah) during ease and adversity, and who suppress their anger, and excuse [the faults of] the people, and Allah loves the virtuous ones. [1]

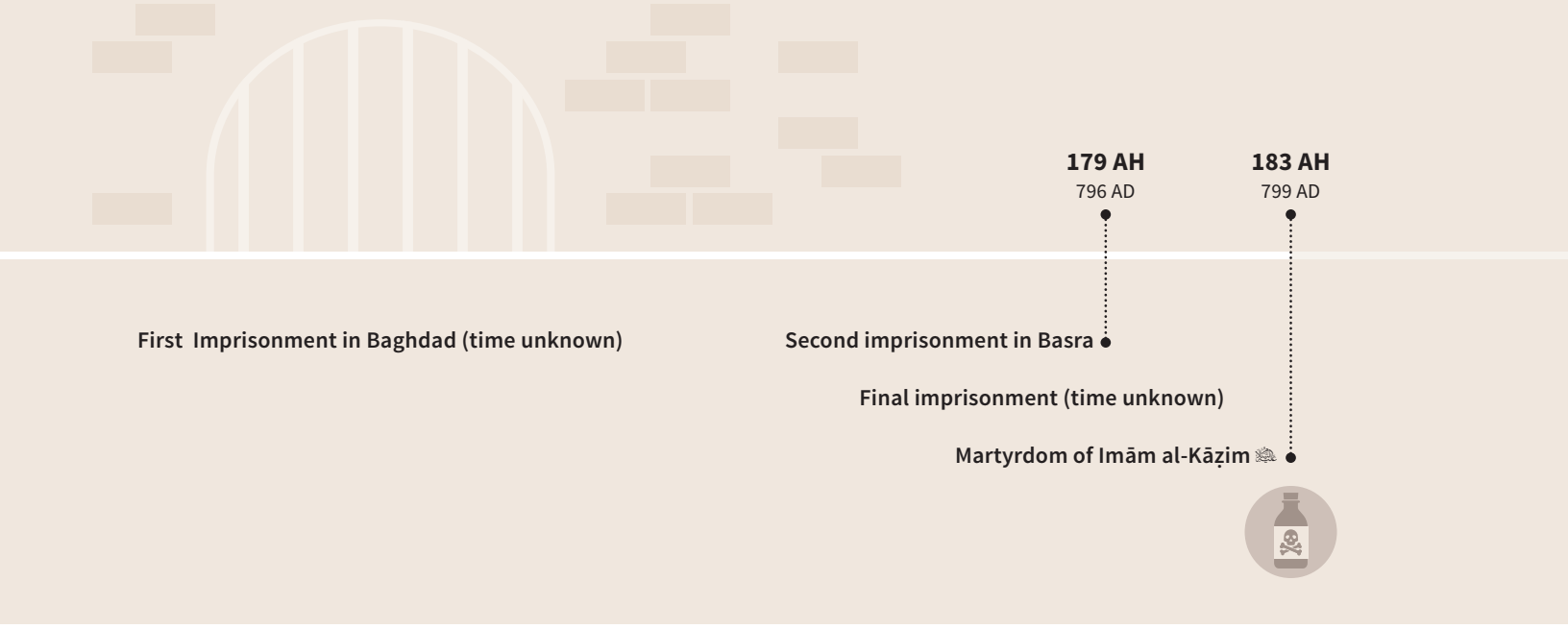
STOP AND REFLECT: What are some ways that we can act on this verse in our daily lives?

Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ emulated this verse perfectly; and if we want to become part of the virtuous ones, then we have to follow his example.

Inshā'Allāh, in this lesson, we will look at the life of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ, categorized into three different eras:

1. From his birth to the martyrdom of his father ﷺ
2. During his own *Imāmah* while he was in Medina
3. During his time in the prison of Baghdād until his own martyrdom.

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Āl 'Imrān (3), Verses 133-134.



DURING THE TIME OF IMĀM JAʿFAR AṢ-ṢĀDIQ ﷺ

The 7th Imām was born in Abwāʾ, a location between Mecca and Medina, while his family was traveling back from *Ḥajj*. When the caravan stopped at Abwāʾ, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim's father, decided to stay there for a few days. On the third day, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ received news that his wife, Ḥamīdah, had given birth. Upon returning to Medina, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ served food for three days, and invited every needy person in the area to his house to celebrate the birth of his son.[2]

STOP AND REFLECT: How is feeding the needy a form of celebration for a joyous event? Can you think of some instances where it is obligatory *(wājib)* to feed the needy?

The mother of the 7th Imām, Lady Ḥamīdah, was a faithful woman and a learned scholar. She used to teach religion to Muslim women in Medina, with the guidance of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. She, alongside Imām aṣ-Ṣadiq ﷺ, did the best upbringing of their children, especially the 7th Imām ﷺ.[3]

Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ was very thoughtful and caring, especially toward the poor and oppressed people.[4] During the night, he used to carry food and a bag of dirhams on his shoulders, and distribute it secretly amongst the needy.[5] The Imām ﷺ would say:

> "Helping the needy ones is the best (form) of Sadaqah." [6]

During the time of Imām al-Kāẓim's father, society was full of destructive, intellectual movements. His father worked hard to educate people as a way to counter these movements. There were corrupt intellectuals in many Islamic countries who did their best to change the philosophy of Islamic ethics; they also urged people to perform *ḥarām,* and to corrupt social laws which Islam had established. Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ grew up seeing his father resist these beliefs, and soon after, he himself persisted against such people and their deviated ideologies.

2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, Pp. 385-386.
3 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, P. 525; Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-Warā*, Vol. 2, P. 62.
4 Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. 13, Pp. 30-33; Qarashī, *Ḥayāt al-Imām Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar*, Vol. 2, Pp. 154-167.
5 Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmdat al-Ṭālib*, P. 177.
6 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, P. 414.

IMĀM MŪSĀ AL-KĀẒIM ﷺ AS A TEACHER

The 7th Imām ﷺ, like his father and grandfathers before him, was an excellent teacher. One of the lessons that stands out is how he taught one of his companions, ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn. ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn was the 7th Imām's student in economics, during the time of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. He was intent on removing the roots of poverty from society and learned how to do so from the 7th Imām ﷺ.He saw that the Imām ﷺ had a variety of sources of income and investments, and wondered why. What might be the drawbacks of relying on one single source that led the Imām ﷺ to do this? Perhaps these actions of the Imām ﷺ help us reach a conclusion that having a variety of sources of income will protect a person against loss if any one source plunges or suffers a loss.[7]

It is said that Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ taught ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn the way of conditional investments in businesses. The condition for this investment would be that if a person was successful in their business, they would have to teach five other people the ways of business, and those five would then teach five more individuals.

In this way, the Shīʿahs were able to create a network of people helping one another escape from poverty. This strategy really worked to help the Shīʿahs of that time.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can we help improve the financial hardships that some of our community members are facing today?

DURING HIS OWN IMAMATE

Throughout the 35 years of his Imamate, whenever Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ was in Medina, he would spread the teachings of Islam like his father, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, had done. Sometimes he was forced to flee from Medina and hide. At other times, he was brought by force to Iraq and imprisoned by the caliph. At certain times, the government treated him with respect and honor; while at other times, he was insulted and abused.

Throughout these trying times, Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ—like all of the other Imāms ﷺ—worked on three important goals:

1. Spreading the pure teachings of Islam, and the real understandings of the Noble Qurʾān.
2. Explaining the concept of Imamate, and the true Islamic approach to government.
3. Working toward establishing a just Islamic government.

It was this third goal that placed the Imām's life in danger. Especially after the tragedy of Karbalāʾ, the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ were preparing the grounds for open, political resistance. They had an organized network of Shīʿah that stretched across the Muslim world.

The Shīʿahs would send the Imāms ﷺ *khums* money, and carry out the orders of the Imāms ﷺ. Although this was done in a very secretive manner, the caliphs of the time were not entirely clueless of what was happening. Imām al-Kāẓim's situation was no exception. Once, a nephew of the Imām ﷺ—who was a traitor—went to Hārūn ar-Rashīd, the ʿAbbāsid caliph at the time, and warned him about the Imām ﷺ and his activities. He told him: "Do not think that you are the only caliph in the Muslim world. No! Imām al-Kāẓim is also a caliph. You receive tax money, and he also receives tax money [via *khums*]." [8]

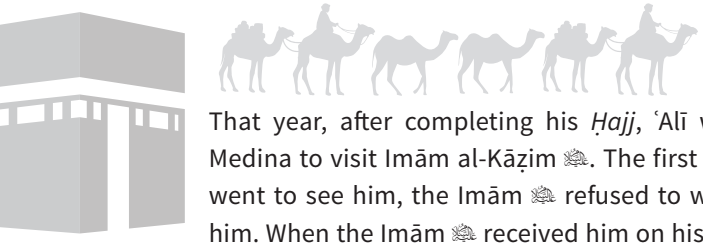
ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn was one of the Imām's close companions from a very early age. Everyone thought that ʿAlī was a genius, not knowing that the 7th Imām ﷺ had taught him Islamic Sciences, including Economics and Politics. Hārūn Rashīd asked ʿAlī to be the finance minister and his close advisor. The Imām ﷺ advised him: "If you can help the Muslim community be stable, and if you can assist the poor and needy people, then you should accept such a job." [9] The Imām ﷺ sent him specific advice many times to allow for change in the government. In some instances, the Imām ﷺ was informed by the Almighty about the danger that ʿAlī was in, and he let ʿAlī know this, which led to him being saved from the cruel punishments of the ruler of his time. ʿAlī worked very hard and implemented many policies under the guidance of the Imām ﷺ such that he became famous all over the Muslim empire.

7 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 5, P. 91; ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 47, P. 51.
8 Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Al-Manāqib*, Vol. 4, P. 324.
9 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 48, P. 136.

THE IMĀM'S FAIR LEADERSHIP

Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ made sure that he held his followers accountable for their actions, including ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn.

Ibrāhīm, who was a caretaker of the camels from Kūfah, was excited to see ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn. However, perhaps because he was surrounded by people with much power, ʿAlī did not welcome him. Ibrāhīm's heart was broken by this action, and he was very sad, even when he returned back to Kūfah.



That year, after completing his *Ḥajj*, ʿAlī went to Medina to visit Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ. The first time he went to see him, the Imām ﷺ refused to welcome him. When the Imām ﷺ received him on his second day, ʿAlī knew that he had made some mistake. He asked the Imām ﷺ: "What crime have I committed?" The Imām ﷺ told him: "You refused to welcome Ibrāhīm, so I refused to welcome you. Allah will not accept your *Ḥajj* unless Ibrāhīm forgives you."

ʿAlī admitted his mistake in this regard. Being a devoted companion, he went all the way to Kūfah and found Ibrāhīm's house. ʿAlī knocked at his door and begged him for forgiveness.

Ibrāhīm was shocked at this sudden change. He asked ʿAlī why he had come so far just to apologize to him. ʿAlī told him: "My master is not happy [with me]!" After apologizing and asking for forgiveness, Ibrāhīm forgave ʿAlī; then when ʿAlī returned to Medina, the Imām ﷺ was waiting for him.

He hugged and kissed ʿAlī, and said:

> "I was tough on you because I did not want you to lose your reward." [10]

STOP AND REFLECT: How does this story show that we must be cognizant of all of our actions?

Our 7th Imām ﷺ was imprisoned a few times in the course of his life. He lived during the reign of several Umayyad caliphs, then the ʿAbbāsid rulers who treated the ʿAlawīs (the progeny of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ) very cruelly. Manṣūr, Mahdī, his son Hādī, and Hārūn are some examples of rulers who mistreated the Imām ﷺ. During the Imām's life, Shīʿahs were persecuted throughout the Muslim lands.

STOP AND REFLECT: How do you think Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ remained in contact with his companions during his imprisonment? How would life have been different for them if he was not jailed for so long?

The Imām ﷺ remained in contact with his students, and would guide them on how to teach Islam in their own communities. Throughout his life—despite the oppression that he constantly faced from the ʿAbbāsid rulers—the Imām ﷺ was committed to improving the lives of the Shīʿahs. It was the tireless struggles of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ that kept the Shīʿah community safe and vibrant, allowing them to not only remain alive, but also continue their scholarly and political activities.[11]

10 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 48, P. 85.

11 On various occasions, the Imām ﷺ had to practice *taqiyyah* (which means not to disclose your true beliefs for a deeper reason, or if one's life is in danger), or he advised his companions to practice it by hiding their true beliefs in order to best work toward their goals. The example of ʿAli ibn Yaqṭīn being a minister for Hārūn is one such instance.

Activity 2.7a: Review Questions

1. State a specific example of how the Imām ﷺ was caring and generous to those in need in his early life. Did all of the Imāms ﷺ show special traits in their very early years?

2. Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ said to ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn: "You refused to welcome Ibrāhīm, so I refused to welcome you." What strategy was the Imām ﷺ using to teach this companion a lesson?

3. **Personal Reflection:** What are some specific takeaways from the life of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ that you can implement in your daily life?

4. Compare the "*ghaybah*" (occultation) of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ in prison to the *ghaybah* of our current Imām عجل الله فرجه today. What can we learn from the Shīʿahs of that time?

Activity 2.7b: Charting

Complete the chart below using the information above from three different eras of the 7th Imām's life.

ERA	One specific example of him as a teacher in this era	One specific way in which he improved the lives of the Shīʿahs	What is your biggest takeaway from this era of his life?
His birth to martyrdom of his father			
During his own Imāmah			
His time in the Baghdad prison to his martyrdom			

Activity 2.7c: Charitable Giving and Economics

Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ told ʿAlī ibn Yaqtīn that: "If you can help the Muslim community be stable, and if you can help the poor and needy people, then you should accept such a job." [12]

1. If you could help someone by giving them any of the below, which would you be able to donate? Why? Fill out the chart below.

DONATION TYPE	How much do you have to give?	Who is in need of it/ where can you donate it to?	How would they benefit?
TIME			
MONEY			
USEFUL ITEMS			
SHARING YOUR TALENTS			

2. Which donation type did the Imām ﷺ and his companion give to the wider Muslim community? Why were they so successful?

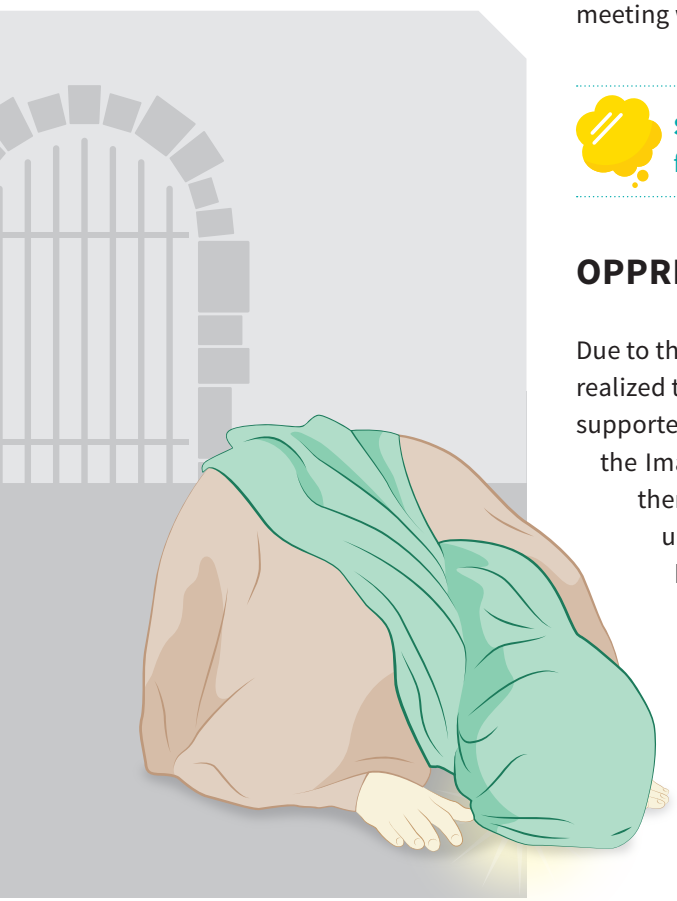
12 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 5, P. 109.

2.8 Imām al-Kāẓim's Imprisonment

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand and explain historical events surrounding the imprisonment of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ.
- Explore the political reasons behind the dispute of successorship during the time of this Imām ﷺ.
- Understand the title of *al-Kāẓim*.



BEING A TRUE SLAVE (ʿABD) OF ALLAH ﷻ

One day, Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ was passing by the house of Bishr al-Ḥāfī in Baghdād, and he could hear the sounds of music and singing from inside. Just then, a maid came out of the house with some garbage in her hand. As she put the garbage by the door, the Imām ﷺ asked her: "Is the owner of this house a freeman or a slave?" She replied: "He is a freeman." The Imām ﷺ said to her: "You speak the truth. Had he been a slave, he would have been afraid of his Master."

When the maid entered the house again, her master was sitting at a table with some alcohol. He asked her: "What delayed you?" She told him what happened outside. At this time, a transformation occurred in Bishr. He ran out barefoot toward the Imām ﷺ and began to cry profusely, then he repented in front of the Imām ﷺ.

After this incident, Bishr's life completely changed. He became a man who was detached from worldly things, and became known for his piety. He was referred to by the title of *al-Ḥāfi* (the barefoot one) because he was always seen barefoot after this meeting with the Imām ﷺ.[1]

STOP AND REFLECT: How did the Imām ﷺ show his own *zuhd* (detachment from this lowly world)?

OPPRESSION TOWARD THE IMĀM ﷺ

Due to the circle of influence that Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ had, the caliph, Hārūn ar-Rashīd, realized that if he allowed the Imām ﷺ to remain in Medina, then he would gain more supporters and this could be dangerous for his government. Therefore, he forced the Imām ﷺ to go to Baghdād, where he was initially placed under house arrest, then transferred to a prison. The Imām ﷺ suffered a lot being moved from one unbearable prison to another. However, even while the Imām ﷺ was in prison, he refused to accept the unjust demands of his jailers and showed good morals and etiquettes *(akhlāq)*.

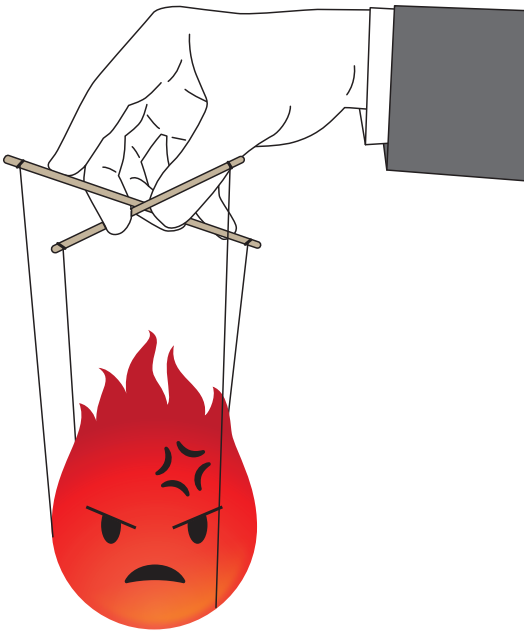
1 ʿAllāmah Ḥillī, *Minhāj al-Karāma fi Maʿrifa al-Imāmah*, Vol. 2, P. 168.

Once, when the Imām 🕋 was imprisoned upon the orders of Hārūn ar-Rashīd by a cruel, non-Muslim jailor by the name of Sindī ibn Shāhak, Hārūn sent a representative to the Imām 🕋 to negotiate his freedom from prison on the condition that the Imām 🕋 would compromise and be supportive of Hārūn. The messenger promised that Hārūn would give the Imām 🕋 any wealth that he wanted. However, the Imām 🕋 completely disregarded the offer of Hārūn and firmly told his messenger: "My wealth and possessions are not present for me to be able to benefit from it [because I have been imprisoned]; and I have not been created to be a beggar [such that I would ask you for anything]!" The Imām 🕋 turned away from the messenger, and said *Allāhu Akbar* to begin his prayer and thus end the conversation.[2]

AL-KĀẒIM: a person who controls or swallows one's anger and has great patience

Some narrations say that even his jailers became impressed with this constant worship of the Imām 🕋, who persisted despite the terrible conditions he was forced to live in.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think the Imām 🕋 refused to give in to the caliph? What would you have done?



THE TITLE AL-KĀZIM

The title *al-Kāẓim* means 'a person who controls or swallows one's anger and has great patience.' The Imām 🕋 is known as *al-Kāẓim* because he had superb control over his anger. The 7th Imām 🕋—like all of our other *Maʿṣūmīn*—was never heard speaking harshly, even in the most unpleasant situations.

For example, one politician in Medina continually harassed the Imām 🕋. He even used abusive language regarding his great-grandfather, Imām 'Alī 🕋, in front of the Imām 🕋. His followers would become very upset and angry with people who constantly verbally abused the Imām 🕋. However, the Imām 🕋 made sure that anyone who used abusive language toward him was still treated nicely, and not harassed by the Imām's companions.[3]

STOP AND REFLECT: Recall a situation that made you very angry or upset. How could you have handled the situation better following the example of Imām al-Kāẓim 🕋? You do not have to share your reflections, but take a mental note for yourself.

2 Al-Qummī, Shaykh ʿAbbās, *Al-Anwār al-Bahīyyah fī Tawārikh al-Ḥujaj al-Ilāhiyyah*, P. 63.
3 Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdādī*, Vol. 13, P. 30.

Activity 2.8a: How to apply this title of *al-Kāẓim*?

For each of the following situations, record a typical knee-jerk or hot-tempered reaction. Then consider how a tolerant and patient person, like Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ, would react in the same scenario. Which reaction is more likely to escalate the conflict? Which is more likely to diffuse it? Create your own fourth scenario, and record what the different reactions for this synopsis might be.

SCENARIO	KNEE-JERK REACTION	REACTING WITH TOLERANCE
A Muslim is seen eating and drinking in a public setting before iftār during the month of Ramaḍān.		
A young student at school is seen stealing other children's lunches.		
A close friend of yours is embarrassed to be seen with you after you become the target of the classroom bully.		

THE DISPUTE OF SUCCESSORSHIP

The Imām's nephew, by the name of ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl, was invited by Hārūn's companions to go to Baghdād and inform Hārūn about the condition and state of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ. When the Imām ﷺ was informed about this plot, he called his nephew and said: "Which way do you want to go?"

ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl replied: "I am going to Baghdād!"

Imām ﷺ asked him: "Why are you going there?"

He answered: "I am in debt, so I may be able to earn some money from there to pay it off."

Imām ﷺ offered to pay off his debt. However, ʿAlī did not accept the money and kept insisting that he had to depart for Baghdād. He said to the Imām ﷺ: "I am determined to go. I request some advice as I depart."

Imām ﷺ said: "It is my will for you not to take part in my death, as the consequences of that will not be good." Imām ﷺ repeated the same sentence once again. Still, his nephew remained resolute.

Despite the insistence of ʿAlī on an act that was betraying Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ, the Imām ﷺ gave him three hundred dīnārs and said: "This is for your children."

After his nephew left, the Imām ﷺ told his companions: "By Allah, this nephew of mine will take part in shedding my blood, and making my children orphans."

The companions asked him: "Since you know that he will do this, why did you still give him money?"

The Imām ﷺ replied: "My grandfather, the Prophet of Allah, said: 'Love your relatives. If a person loves one's relatives and does a favor for them, but that relative in turn mistreats the person and acts vilely, Allah will severely punish them and they will not reach their goal.'" [4]

After the death of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ, his nephew tried to exert his own successorship, but the Shīʿahs obeyed the Imām's guidance and followed his son, Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ, after his death.

4 Al-Yūsufī, Muḥammad Hādī, *Mawsūatut Tarīkh al-Islāmī*, Vol. 7, P. 493.
5 Ṭabrisī, *Lives of the 14 Maʿṣūmīn*, P. 421.
6 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 2, Pp. 231-232.
7 *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 2, Pp. 231-232.
8 *Al-Irshād*, P. 296.

THE IMĀM'S MARTYRDOM

Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ was killed in a heartless manner under the orders of Hārūn ar-Rashīd. He called for Sindī ibn Shahak, who was a vicious executioner, and provoked him to kill Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ, thus Sindī poisoned the 7th Imām ﷺ. It has been said that they martyred him with a poisoned date, and Imām Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar ﷺ, after eating the dates, spent two days with illness and discomfort, then died on the third day.

After the Imām ﷺ was martyred by poison, Sindī ibn Shahak invited the jurists and other people who were in Baghdād, including Hitham ibn ʿUdī, to make it appear to the people that the Imām ﷺ had died a natural death as there were no signs of injury on his body. After that, they put his body on the bridge of Baghdād.[5]

During his life, the Imām ﷺ would often say: "O Allah, make death easy for me, and forgive me when I am being judged on the Day of Judgment." [6] He lived and died by this statement.

After his martyrdom, Hārūn "paid off" false witnesses and tried to make it appear as if the Imām's death had occurred naturally.[7] With this deception, he tried to exonerate himself to stop Imām's supporters from uprising against him. However, with the assistance of one of Hārūn's relatives, a revolt took place in Baghdād. Hārūn's hopes to have the Imām ﷺ buried secretly failed. There was a large funeral for the Imām ﷺ, and people began to realize that the ʿAbbāsid government was the one who killed him.[8]

The Imām ﷺ was buried in a cemetery of the Quraysh. Soon, people began to visit his tomb, and a city grew around his gravesite. Imām al-Kāẓim's grandson, Imām Muḥammad at-Taqī ﷺ, our 9th Imām, is also buried here. This area is now called *Kāẓimayn* which means "two Kāẓims" after the two Imāms ﷺ. A school of theology was founded in this town, and it became populated when people started to visit there. This school is still present there, and is a source of learning for many students from around the world.

STOP AND REFLECT: What does Hārūn's failure in trying to hide the Imām's assassination suggest about Allah's Divine Justice?

Activity 2.8b: Sayings of the Imām ﷺ

Complete the activity below in regards to the following three *ḥadīth* from the Imām ﷺ.

> *The world is soft and beautiful like a snake, but there is a dangerous poison hidden inside of it.*

> *If you can help the Muslim nation be stable, or if you can help the poor and needy people, then you should accept that job.*

> *The best generosity is helping the oppressed.*

1. Pick one of these three sayings of the Imām ﷺ, and draw a picture or comic strip showing an example of it.

2. Choose one of these *ḥadīth,* and reflect on how you can apply it in your daily life. Be sure to include at least three specific examples, and an action plan for the application of the *ḥadīth*.

2.9 Imām Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف: The Universal Savior

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Successfully learn some of the common titles of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.
- Demonstrate the need for a living *ḥujjah.*
- Demonstrate how to effectively balance hope and fear in Islam.
- Understand the concept of *Intiẓār al-Faraj.*

Activity 2.9a: Pre-Reading Quick Write

Before reading this lesson, take five minutes to write down what you know already about Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

The 12th successor, Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, was born on the 15th of Shaʿbān, 255 AH. It was during the time of the ʿAbbāsid caliph, al-Muʿtamid, who had tried to prevent Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī عليه السلام from having any children. However, the 12th Imām عليه السلام was born undetected by the spies of the oppressive government. The Shīʿahs were waiting for Imām al-ʿAskarī عليه السلام to announce his successor, so after the birth of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, a handful of true followers were told about him.

Allah ﷻ granted Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف wisdom and excellence right from birth. Like Prophets ʿĪsā عليه السلام and Yaḥyā عليه السلام, he had the ability to speak as an infant and would recite verses of the Noble Qurʾān from the cradle.[1]

As we have seen from previous lessons, Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is the living Imām of our age. He has already been born and is living among us. The Ahlus Sunnah believe that he is still to be born. Shīʿahs however, believe that Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is alive, but concealed from us. We await his re-appearance, by the command of Allah ﷻ.

Some of the titles of the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف are:

- *al-Qāʾim* (the One who Rises)
- *al-Ḥujjah* (the Proof)
- *al-Muntaẓar* (the Awaited One)
- *al-Muntaẓir* (the One who is Waiting)
- *Ṣāḥibuz Zamān* (Master of this Age)

1 Qaṭb ad-Dīn ar-Rawindi, *Al-Kharāʾij wal Jarāʾiḥ*, Vol. 1, P. 455.

Activity 2.9b: Titles of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

PART 1: Ponder over the titles given to the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف and think about why he has been given these specific names. Complete the middle column of the chart below with your thoughts and ideas. Then complete the last column after a class discussion of the titles and their meanings.

TITLES	PERSONAL REFLECTION: Why was this title given to the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف?	GROUP DISCUSSION: What new points did you learn from the discussion?
Al-Qā'im **(the One who Rises)**		
Al-Ḥujjah **(the Proof)**		
Al-Muntaẓar **(the Awaited one)**		
Al-Muntaẓir **(the One who is Waiting)**		
Ṣāḥibuz Zamān **(Master of this Age)**		

Activity 2.9b: Titles of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف (continued)

PART 2: RESEARCH

Al-Mahdī is also a title of the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. Research what it means, and the significance of it using the following resources. Then write a summary of your findings below.

- **Al-islam.org**
- **https://imam-us.org/islamic-awareness/islam-101/beliefs/ahl-al-bayt/imam-al-hujjat-ibn-al-hassan**

OUR NEED FOR A LIVING PROOF (ḤUJJAH)

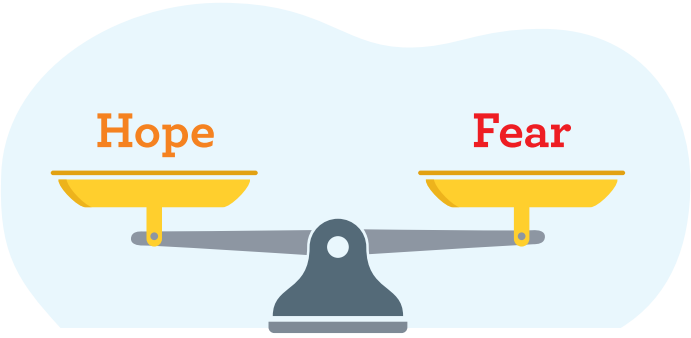
STOP AND REFLECT: Why do we need a living proof guide on this Earth?

At all times, this Earth needs a *ḥujjah*—a Divine representative appointed by Allah ﷻ—just as the shining sun is necessary for life on Earth. Allah ﷻ created this universe for us to reach perfection—which we learned in previous lessons—but this can only be done through Divine guides and revelation. Although Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه الشريف is in occultation, he is still an active guide for all of humanity on Earth. An example that is often used in the *ḥadīth* about our Imām عجل الله فرجه الشريف in occultation is that he is like "the sun behind the clouds." Although he is hidden from us, we still benefit from his light; and we are not concealed from him. He has knowledge about the state of those who believe in him.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Reflect and discuss what it means that the Imām عجل الله فرجه الشريف is like 'the sun behind the clouds;' and how even though he is concealed from us, we are not hidden from him. How are these two similar? Complete the chart below as you draw parallels.

He is like the sun behind the clouds	He is concealed from us; but we are not hidden from him



BALANCING HOPE AND FEAR

The presence of the Imām ﷺ is full of blessings—rooted in peace, tranquility, justice, and fairness. However, since we are limited in our knowledge, we can have a misunderstanding of what the Imām ﷺ will actually do. When we think of the Imām ﷺ returning, we sometimes think of this as being a fearful time. Since many people are going to be against him, we may fear that we are not going to be amongst his followers. We may also think of this as a time of destruction. Is it correct, or okay, to have this type of fear?

Based on several narrations, the return of the Imām ﷺ will bring justice for the oppressed. The Imām's miracles and the truth of his mission will be very clear. As he works to uproot oppression and tyranny from the Earth, more and more people will see the greatness of his mission, and will no longer be influenced by the tyrants. Many people will answer his call and join his mission. Only the arrogant leaders of oppression, and the most stubborn of people will persist in fighting against the Imām ﷺ.

Islam is a religion that is balanced in every way, so we should be balanced between our fear of Allah ﷻ and our belief in the mercy of Allah ﷻ. For example, an excessive belief in mercy may lead us to think that Allah ﷻ will forgive everything we do, even if we are sinning intentionally. However, our repentance may not be sincere in this case. On the other hand, if we have too much fear of Allah ﷻ, then we may become hopeless and stop striving to do better.

In the same way, we should have hope in the return of the Imām ﷺ, while also being fearful of our own selves and our role within that reappearance. This should motivate us to truly anticipate his arrival, prepare ourselves, and lay down the necessary groundwork—which is known as *Intiẓār*.

THE DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE OF INTIẒĀR

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: "The greatest worship for a believer *(muʾmin)* is to wait for the relief from Allah." [2]

Narrations indicate that waiting for relief from Allah ﷻ includes the act of *Intiẓār* which means 'to actively wait and prepare for the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ.' This is one of the greatest, most important, and rewarding actions. One of the titles of the Imām ﷺ is *al-Muntaẓar* which indicates that 'people are waiting for him.' In fact, there are several traditions *(ḥadīth)* from the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ saying that they were also waiting for the reappearance *(ẓuhūr)* of the 12th Imām ﷺ.

Anticipating his reappearance, and truly living as one who is waiting for him, will prepare a person to become a companion of the Imām ﷺ at the time of his reappearance. Even if this person does not live long enough to witness the reappearance of the Imām ﷺ, they will still gain the rewards and be counted as being part of his companions. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

> "The one who dies while anticipating the coming of the Imām, it is as if they were in the tent of the Imām. In fact, it is as if they were fighting the enemies alongside the Messenger of Allah." [3]

STOP AND REFLECT: How can a person have true anticipation in one's heart and actions? How can someone reach this stage?

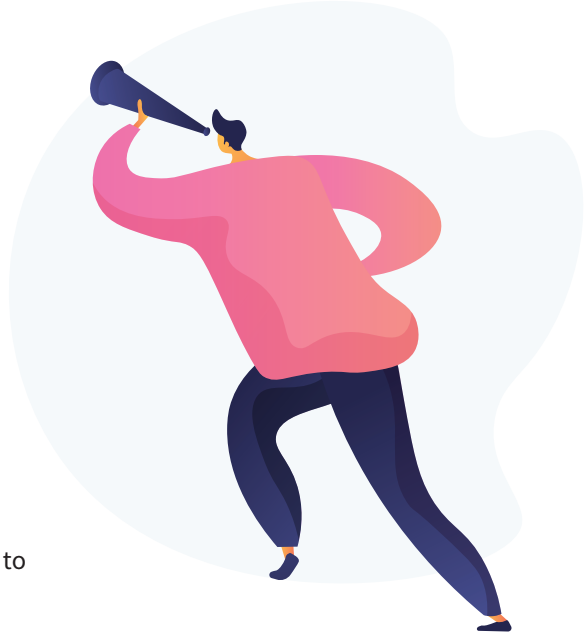
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 52, P. 131.
3 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 52, P. 125; Al-Barqī, *Al-Maḥāsin*, Vol. 1, P. 173.

INTIẒĀR (WAITING WITH ALERTNESS)

This is the state that we are supposed to be in while waiting for our Imām ﷺ. It is not waiting idly or passively. It must be an active anticipation that involves preparation and eagerness for the Imām's arrival, and hope for a better future.

STOP AND REFLECT: What oppression and destruction do you see around the world, in your own surroundings, and even within yourself nowadays? How does this make you feel? How do you think this would be different if the Imām ﷺ was ruling the entire world?

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR



Sometimes it becomes easy for us to think or believe that our society is currently good. We often become comfortable in our lives. However, we are truly at a very big loss without having the presence of our current Imām ﷺ. Although we may have some indirect guidance from him in different forms—such as the guidance of our scholars, and the Imām's limited presence even during occultation—however, having direct guidance from the Imām ﷺ is among the best of blessings.

We can perhaps get a glimpse of what it will be like to receive direct guidance from the Imām ﷺ from our past experiences. If you have ever been to *ziyārah* to the holy shrines, then at times, you may have felt the presence of the Imāms ﷺ in their *Ḥarams*. In Muḥarram, you may also feel the presence of the Imāms ﷺ, or experience a change within yourself, or find that you want to become even closer to them, and further act on their beautiful teachings.

Some people may be ashamed of being in the presence of the Imām ﷺ due to their past sins. But let us remember that just like we can always repent to Allah ﷻ while we are alive, similarly, the gate toward prosperity through our Imāms' mercy and acceptance is always open—regardless of how shameful we may be due to our wrong decisions and actions.

INTIẒĀR: to actively wait and prepare for the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ

STOP AND REFLECT: Has there been a moment in your life where you felt a strong presence of an Imām ﷺ? Describe it. If there has not been, then what specific actions can you incorporate into your life to feel their love and presence in your heart?

We also see that there are many social problems and different types of oppressions around the world. Although we should make our best efforts to solve these problems, our efforts will not reach completion or true perfection until after the return of the Imām ﷺ. We should also remember that the return of the Imām ﷺ is the promise of Allah ﷻ, which we should not take lightly.

SOME DIMENSIONS OF INTIẒĀR

1. **Know the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف:** Find out as much as you can about the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. There is a narration that says: "A person who dies without knowing the Imām of their time dies the death of ignorance and disbelief." However, more important than historical and biographical details is knowing what he stands for, and what he wants from all of us.
2. **Show your love for the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف:** Remember him often, especially on happy occasions; give charity on his behalf; and attend gatherings where he is mentioned are some of the ways in which we can express our love for him.
3. **Develop an emotional connection with the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف:** Recite special supplications and prayers for the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف; write letters to him; and talk to him on a regular basis knowing that he can hear us by the ability that Allah ﷻ has blessed him with.
4. **Act on your knowledge and love:** Perform those deeds that you know the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف would want you to do. Involve yourself in projects and programs that will improve the community, and that the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف would approve of.
5. **Self growth and monitoring oneself regularly:** Constantly have the mindset of enhancing your own beliefs, ethics, and deeds. Make sure to partake in self improvement acts such as: *mushāraṭa* which means to set conditions for oneself to do good deeds and avoid bad actions; *murāqabah* which means a person watches over one's heart and soul; and *muḥāsabah* which means a person takes account of one's actions on a regular basis.

STOP AND REFLECT: Are there any other ways you can think of to do *Intiẓār*?

BECOMING FOLLOWERS OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

Once we come to love the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف of our time, we will naturally want to be among his helpers, and will yearn for his reappearance. Our living Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is waiting for us, as a community, to be at a stage where we are ready for his return. Narrations such as the following indicate that if we have a deep understanding *(maʿrifah)* of Imām al-Mahdī's status, then we will be able to truly recognize that he is amongst us day and night.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said:

For the Qāʾim, there will be two occultations (ghaybahs): One of them will be short, and the other one will be long. In the first occultation, only the elite of his Shīʿah will know his location; and in the second one, none except the most elite among the followers in their practice of religion will know of it.[4]

4 Nuʿmānī, *Al-Ghaybah*, Vol. 1, P. 170.

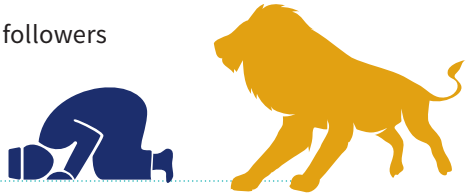
As this narration indicates, during the first and minor occultation, the Imām ﷺ had appointed four specific individuals as his representatives over a period of 69 years during this occultation. After this, the Imām ﷺ began his second and major occultation, which continues until today. During this time, there are some elite people who may communicate with the Imām ﷺ through various means, but we do not specifically know who these individuals are, and they usually do not make their communications known, nor publicize them.

These days during the time of the major occultation are very challenging, but ones that hold within them great opportunities as well. The narrations indicate that those who believe in the final Imām ﷺ during the difficult period of occultation, and those who actively anticipate his reappearance, have a very special status with Allah ﷻ, and are in fact the best of people. Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ said the following to a companion by the name of Abū Khālid:

The people at the time of the occultation of al-Qāiʾm—who believe in his Imāmah and wait for his reappearance—are better than the people of all other times. This is because Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, will give them such strong belief and understanding that the occultation will become to them like seeing him (meaning that even though the Imām will not be physically among them, they will still be able feel and visualize his presence); and He will make them in that time to have the status of those who fought alongside the Messenger of Allah with the sword. They are the truly sincere ones, and the real Shīʿahs, and the callers to the religion of Allah, the Glorified, the Exalted, both in public and in private. [5]

So, how can we become true followers of the 12th Imām ﷺ?

According to some narrations, the followers of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ are devout by night, and lions by day.[6]



STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think it means to be "devout by night and lions by day?"

This means that they are active during the day—standing up against oppression and dishonesty, while fulfilling their obligations to their family, community, and society. At night, they humble themselves in prayer and in front of Allah ﷻ—seeking nearness to Him.

They are courageous, determined, and submissive on Allah's path while being patient and wise, and they struggle for Islamic values to be spread throughout the world. Patience and perseverance are their main characteristics—they are never hasty.

Let us now look at the features of these blessed people—the followers of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ—as described in some narrations:

The nature of his (al-Mahdī's) followers will be pure and immaculate. They will be free from hypocrisy and all other contaminations.[7]

Their hearts (the followers of Imām al-Mahdī) will be untainted and unadulterated by malice, jealousy, or enmity. [8]

Attaining nearness and love of the 12th Imām ﷺ will help us get closer to Allah ﷻ, and achieve our true purpose in this life. Therefore, it is important that we understand what it means for him to reappear, and what our role is as people of the end of times. Our responsibilities—as we strive to be these people—is to do true *Intiẓār* of the Imām ﷺ, and act in such a way that if he were to come tomorrow, we would be fully prepared.

5 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl ad-Dīn*, P. 319.
6 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 52, P. 386.
7 *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 52, P. 35.
8 *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 52, P. 35.

Activity 2.9c: Review Questions

1. What does *Intiẓār* mean?

   a. Waiting with alertness, and preparing the grounds for his return through good actions
   b. Studying books and memorizing their contents so that we can win competitions
   c. Praying for the return of the Imām ﷺ, and waiting for the Imām ﷺ to fix everything

2. The followers of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ are:

   a. Patient and courageous
   b. Courageous and impatient
   c. Strong and merciless

3. How do you think doing *Intiẓār* of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ can help us gain proximity to Allah ﷻ?

4. Which is more important—*Intiẓār al-Faraj* on a personal level or on a community level? Why?

5. In *Duʿāʾ an-Nudbah*, we say: "May my soul be ransom for you; for although you are hidden from us, you have never abandoned us. May my soul be ransom for you; for although you are away, you have never been away from us." Take five minutes of personal reflection to see how your actions may conflict with these statements. Then, complete the worksheet below to become better at doing true *Intiẓār*.

Activity 2.9d: Dimensions of Intiẓār

We can all anticipate the Imām ﷺ individually, but it is also essential that we do so as a community. Below, brainstorm some (at least two) practical ways of applying *Intiẓār* into your personal life, and how you can apply it at a community level.

An example of how to develop an emotional connection to the Imām ﷺ is included.

DIMENSION	EXAMPLE OF INTIẒĀR ON A PERSONAL LEVEL	EXAMPLE OF INTIẒĀR AT A SOCIAL LEVEL
Knowing the Imām ﷺ		
Showing love for the Imām ﷺ		
Developing an emotional connection to the Imām ﷺ	Recite *Duʿāʾ al-Faraj* on your own every morning to renew your allegiance.	Recite *Duʿāʾ al-Faraj* with the community at least once a week, and remember the Imām ﷺ by collectively reciting his *ziyārāt.*
Show your knowledge and love in action		
Self growth or monitoring the self		

CHAPTER 3

History of Prophets عليهم السلام

3.1 Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام and Justice

3.2 Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and Waḥy

3.3 Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام on the Other Side

3.1 Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ and Justice

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn about the life of Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ.
- Understand the responsibilities of being a just judge and leader in our communities.
- Demonstrate the need for societal justice.
- Understand and demonstrate how personal justice can lead to creating just leaders within society.

MAʿṢŪM:
immaculate, free from committing any sins

Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ was one of Allah's Messengers. A Messenger is sent down with a Divine Book, in this case, *Az-Zabūr* (The Psalms). His name appears in the Noble Qurʾān a total of 16 times.

Like all other Prophets of Allah ﷻ, Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ was immaculate, free from committing any sins *(Maʿṣūm)*.[1] He had an excellent character, and has been praised in the Noble Qurʾān for being completely submissive to the Will of Allah ﷻ despite having special blessings and many riches.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

اصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُودَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ ۖ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ ۝ إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ ۝ وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً ۖ كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ ۝ وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ ۝

Be patient over what they say, and remember Our servant, Dāwūd, the possessor of strength; indeed, he was a penitent [soul] who repeatedly turned back (to Allah). Indeed, We subjected the mountains to glorify [Allah] with him at evening and dawn; and the birds [as well], mustered [in flocks]—all echoing him [in a chorus]. And We strengthened his kingdom, and We gave him wisdom and conclusive speech. [2]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, contemplate the above verses from the Noble Qurʾān. How does Allah ﷻ outline the blessings that He bestowed on Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ? What are some of the traits used to describe this Prophet ﷺ?

1 This is in contrast to the Bible, which presents the Noble Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ as a jealous, lustful leader who plotted for his loyal commander Uriah to be killed in a war, and committed other sins. See 2 Samuel 11.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṣād (38), Verses 17-20.

PROPHET DĀWŪD ﷺ AS A JUDGE

One day, Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ was praying in his prayer niche *(miḥrāb),* so he told his guards not to allow anyone to come in or interrupt him. However, two men managed to enter inside. The men greeted him as they entered, and startled Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ. He asked who they were, and their reason for coming to see him.

One of the men said: "We are sorry for disturbing you…We have a dispute and have come to you for your judgment to decide between us."

Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ asked them: "How can I help?"

The first man said: "This is my brother. He has ninety-nine sheep, and I have only one. He is strongly demanding that I hand over mine to him."

The brother speaking made his point convincingly, and the other man did not object, so Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ passed a judgment in their case. However, soon after, Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ realized that even though he had not made an error in the judgment itself, and both parties were satisfied, he had not adhered to the best process by which to announce the judgment, and he had spoken in haste. Both parties should have been treated equally in every way, and the other brother should have been given an opportunity to speak. Although Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ committed no sin, we know that all Prophets ﷺ are held to higher standards in their conduct by Allah ﷻ. Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ was caught off guard because these two brothers had come to him at a time and place where no one was allowed to enter, especially without prior permission.

The judgment of Prophets ﷺ and that of normal kings is very different. The discernment of a Prophet ﷺ is always going to be in line with Divine justice, regardless of how it may be perceived outwardly. We must learn from this, that as Muslims, we cannot pass any judgment unless we take the time to listen to all of the parties involved.

Ultimately, Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ immediately sought forgiveness from Allah ﷻ and regretted his quickness in making a judgement. The Noble Qurʾān states:

(We said:) 'O Dāwūd, verily We have placed you as a successor on the earth, so judge you between the people in truth (and justice), and do not follow (your own) desire, for it will mislead you from the Path of Allah.'[3]

Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ brought the two brothers back and atoned for his error. He was generally a very just and wise king and Prophet ﷺ, who maintained justice among his people, as did his son Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ after him.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ also advised us in regards to this situation where he said:

"When two people bring a case against one another before you in order to be judged, do not give any ruling (after you hear just) the first person before you hear out the second (person as well). If you adhere to this, then the (final) judgment will become clear for you." [4]

4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, Vol. 3, P. 13, Ḥadīth #3238.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṣād (38), Verse 26.

Activity 3.1a: Scenario

Two of your classmates, Zaynab and Maysoon, are arguing about who was the first person to score in the basketball game. Sometimes, when Maysoon argues, she comes off really strong and somewhat rude. You know that Zaynab was the first one to score, but you do not want to get involved. Suddenly they both turn to you to end the argument. What should you do? Why?

Islam places a lot of emphasis on fair judgment. This issue is discussed in many places in the Noble Qurʾān. If a person is ever required to make a judgment, then one is expected to follow these general principles:

- Do not hasten or hurry to issue a judgment about people, or between them.
- Before making any judgment, ensure that you have full knowledge about the whole story or problem.
- Ensure that the source or witness providing the information is reliable and trustworthy.
- Make sure that if you ever have to judge, then it is based on the truth—even if it may go against your own personal desires or interests.
- Do not pass any judgments while you are in a disturbed emotional state, such as being angry.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said to Shurayḥ, a judge during his time: "Do not whisper to anyone in your court; and if you get angry, then leave—do not judge while you are angry." [5]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why did Imām ʿAlī ﷺ prohibit Shurayḥ from passing any judgment while he was angry? What could happen if someone judges over other people while they are angry?

5 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 7, P. 413, Ḥadīth #5.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ISLAM

Judging fairly between people is one example of establishing social justice. Islam is a religion built on the pillars of justice, and all Muslims must live their lives following its principles. While social justice is apparent only on a societal level, its foundation lies in each and every individual within that society upholding justice. Some examples include speaking the truth, being non-discriminative where Islam commands, and standing up to any form of oppression.

Seeking justice is a natural thing within all human beings. Take the example of a child who leaves an apple with you to watch over. After a while, when he comes back to get it, if you have eaten even a small portion of it without asking, then he will be upset with you. Even a child knows about the concept of injustice even though they may not be able to tell you this verbally.

There is hardly any society which does not look up to truthfulness, justice, and rational laws. Unfortunately, because people fall prey to personal whims and desires, they corrupt this pure innate disposition that is there in all human beings.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

On a personal level, how can we seek justice for our communities? Refer to Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57), Verse 25 in the Noble Qurʾān. What does this verse tell us? Discuss it with your partner, and be prepared to share your answers with the class.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF PROPHET DĀWŪD ﷺ

We can learn many lessons from the life of this great Prophet ﷺ for our present day. Some of these are explained below.

The leaders of our world should be people who are God-conscious, no matter how much power or money they achieve. Prophet Dāwūd's power was great, yet he remained conscious and in awe of Allah ﷻ at all times. This God-wariness can be seen in our faithful legitimate leaders in one or two parts of our modern world. We mentioned one example of a movement with such a leader in previous years' lessons on Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ.

When we learn to deal with ourselves and others in a fair manner, then we have the potential to become just leaders within our societies and communities. We need to implement the lessons of justice in order to create God-conscious communities, and not focus on our own desires or fame and glory. Nowadays, most political leaders seem to have only one agenda, and that is to maintain or extend their own power. We see leaders lie, cheat, oppress, and/or back down from their values in order to stay in power and govern other people.

STOP AND REFLECT: Has your current local leader (Mayor or City Hall representative), or national representative (senator, congressman, or member of parliament), fulfilled the promises that they made before elections? What are some ways in our societies that we see leaders betray the trust of the people and lead unjustly?

If the leaders of communities truly submit to Allah ﷻ, then their power and respect will only increase. Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ was given power over even the mountains and birds. He was given wisdom, eloquence, and discerning judgment. This is all because he was God-conscious. In Sūrah Nūḥ, Allah ﷻ promised the community of that Prophet ﷺ that if they simply turned to Allah ﷻ and asked for forgiveness, then He would send abundant blessings upon them.[6] Of course, this applies to all people and different communities.

The Qurʾān, as we know, is a Book of guidance and principles, not just stories. We need to read the verses with understanding, and use them as a guideline for how to deal with others. When we live in accordance with justice and equality, we create a better world for ourselves and for others.

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Nūḥ (71), Verses 11-12.

Activity 3.1b: Review Questions

1. In your own words, from the story of Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ and the two men, what is the most important lesson that can be derived?

2. How do you think social justice can be achieved?

3. Research a *ḥadīth* about the society that Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ will establish. Write down the *ḥadīth*. What are some of the elements listed about society at that time? Will it be a just society? Why or why not?

4. Being a just leader is not an easy responsibility. Write down some key attributes that are necessary to be a just leader and apply the Islamic principle that matches. The first one is completed for you as an example.

Key Attribute Needed to be a Just Leader	Islamic Principle
Listen to all parties involved fairly	Do not hasten or hurry to implement a judgment

5. Why is it important to first implement personal justice (learning how to judge between others who are close family members or friends, and treating them fairly) before leading an entire community?

3.2 Prophet Mūsā ﷺ and Waḥy

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

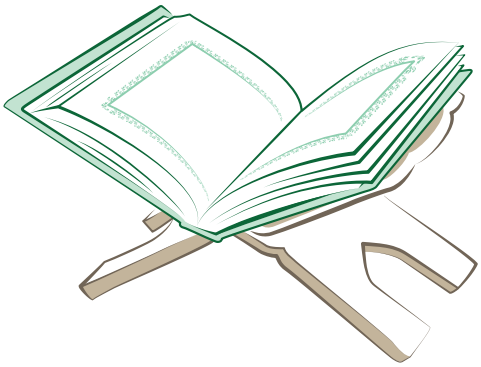
- Review the timeline of the life of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ.
- Understand the difference between revelation and inspiration.
- Comprehend the role of Lady Āsiyah, and why she is one of the four Women of Paradise.
- Learn the importance of, and the various themes of the different points in Prophet Mūsā's life.

Prophet Mūsā ﷺ is mentioned the most out of all of the Prophets ﷺ in the Noble Qurʾān: 134 times across 34 chapters.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think Prophet Musa ﷺ is mentioned so often?

This can be explained by the following:

- The goal of the Noble Qurʾān is to be a guide for all of humankind at any point in time, meaning from the start of Islam up until the Day of Judgment. Allah ﷻ includes topics that have occurred in the past that we can learn from. From all of the Prophets ﷺ, only 26 of them are mentioned by name. Prophet Mūsā ﷺ had such a wide scope of challenges and interactions that each story presents some type of common problem and solution that all of humanity can benefit from. Since the Jews at the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ were the same community whose forefathers had received abundant blessings—including being the recipients of over 400 Prophets ﷺ—Allah ﷻ wished to warn them against repeating the same mistakes with the final Messenger ﷺ like they had made with Prophet Mūsā ﷺ. The stories of the people of the Children of Isrāʾīl were also a warning for the Muslims at the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and those who came after them—not to make the same mistakes which were made by that tribe.
- Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ suffered immensely during his lifetime. His sufferings were similar to those of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, although a lot more severe. Allah ﷻ wished to console and strengthen the heart of His final Messenger ﷺ by narrating the story of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, and informing him that previous Prophets ﷺ also suffered, but Allah ﷻ was always the best Helper to His Prophets ﷺ and true believers.



The name of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, Muḥammad, has only been mentioned four times in the Noble Qurʾān (and one more time as Aḥmad), which is much less than the number of times that Prophet Mūsā's name is mentioned. However, the final Messenger ﷺ has been addressed in several other ways in the Qurʾān, such as *"Ya ayyuhal Muzzammil"* (O you (who are) wrapped up (in a mantle))[1] or *"Ya ayyuhar Rasūl"* (O Messenger).[2] These different titles show the great status and prestige of the last Prophet ﷺ.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muzzammil (73), Verse 1.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 67.

THE BIRTH OF PROPHET MŪSĀ

Even before Prophet Mūsā was born, his father ʿImrān passed away. As we learned in previous years, the birth of Prophet Mūsā was kept secret in order to protect his life from the vicious Pharaoh of that time. The Pharaoh was an oppressive leader who had heard that a baby boy would be born from the Children of Isrāʾīl who would stand up against him. As a result, he ordered that all newborn male babies must be killed.

The pregnancy of Prophet Mūsā's mother—due to the Decree and Will of Allah —was completely concealed, and she gave birth to Prophet Mūsā in secrecy. She feared that her son would be killed by the Pharaoh, but Allah —having a plan for His Prophet —inspired her to hide Prophet Mūsā in a basket and place that into the river. Prophet Mūsā's mother was fearful, but Allah removed her fears and assured her that her son would be fine, and that he would be returned back to her.

Allah says in the Noble Qurʾān:

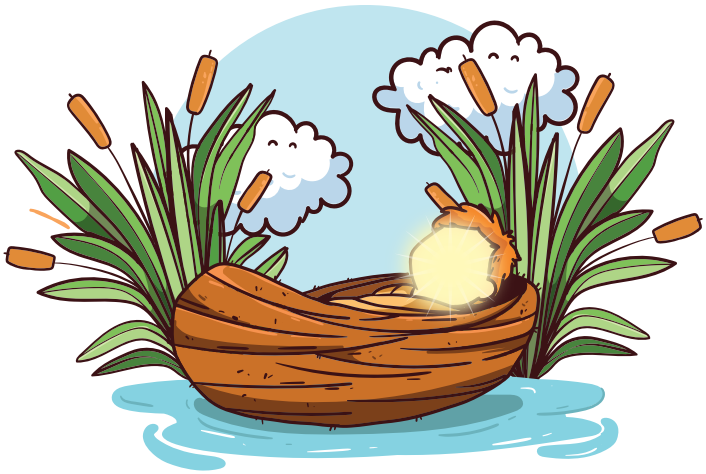
And We revealed to the mother of Mūsā [saying]: 'Nurse him; but then when you fear for him, cast him into the river, and do not fear nor grieve, for indeed We will restore him to you, and make him one of the apostles.' [3]

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

One of the meanings of *waḥy* in the Qurʾān is 'the transmission of Divine Knowledge from Allah exclusively to His Prophets .' For example, the words of the Qurʾān are a type of *waḥy*. However, *waḥy* in the Qurʾān does not always mean revelation to the Prophets . In its more general meaning, it refers to a type of secret communication that is not easily heard by anyone other than the one for whom it is intended. For example, the word *waḥy* is used in the Qurʾān to describe the natural instincts that Allah created the animals and insects with. Allah says that He inspires (does *waḥy)* to the bees so that they build their houses in certain places:

And your Lord inspired the bee, saying: 'Take you habitations in the mountains, houses, and in the trees, and in what they (human beings) build.' [4]

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 7.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Naḥl (16), Verse 68.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 9.



In this verse, *awḥā* (which comes from the same root as *waḥy*) has been translated as "inspire," and it refers to the God-given instinct that bees have which allow them to build intricate beehives. Sometimes, certain human beings can receive special inspiration in their heart from Allah , as was the case with the mother of Prophet Mūsā . The fact that she received such inspiration shows that she was a special servant of Allah who had been chosen for the difficult test of giving birth to a beautiful child—only to have to let him go shortly afterwards. She had to trust that Allah would take care of him, even when she was placing the basket containing him into the river using her own hands. Putting all of her reliance on Allah , Prophet Mūsā's mother gently placed the wooden basket in the river and watched her beloved baby float away. Soon after, Prophet Mūsā was picked up by the Pharaoh—an enemy of Allah and Prophet Mūsā . However, by the Grace of Allah , the hearts of the Pharaoh and his wife, Lady Āsiyah, fell in love with him at first glance, and because they had no children of their own, Lady Āsiyah suggested to her husband that they adopt him.

Pharaoh's wife said [to him]: '[This infant will be] a [source of] comfort for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we can adopt him as a son.' But they were not aware.[5]

By the command of Allah , Prophet Mūsā refused to feed from any of the 400 wet-nurses that were provided to suckle him, until his mother was eventually called to feed him, and he accepted her milk. No one in the house of Pharaoh was aware that she was in fact his mother. In this way, Allah saved him, and reunited him with his mother.

THE ROLE OF LADY ĀSIYAH

The Noble Qurʾān presents Āsiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, as one of the best role models for those who believe—and for both men and women. Although she was the wife of an arrogant and tyrant ruler, she was able to see and accept the truth in the message of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ. For her, wealth and status were not any criteria of human excellence; she realized that without faith in Allah ﷻ, a human being has nothing. Although she had everything that a person could ever want in this worldly life from the materialistic point of view—the best of clothes, food, jewellery, servants, etc.—she sacrificed all of that to be closer to Allah ﷻ. That is why she is included in a narration of the Prophet ﷺ where he mentions the four women of Paradise.[6]

Lady Āsiyah, upon witnessing the miracles of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ and hearing his message of unity and truth, embraced his religion, and submitted herself to Allah ﷻ. When the Pharaoh was informed about her decision, he threatened to punish her if she did not leave her belief in the One True God, Allah; and when that did not work—as she refused to give up her faith—he tortured her to death. During her final moments, she beautifully asked Allah ﷻ to build for her NEAR HIM a house in Heaven, and sacrificed her life in order to maintain her faith. Allah ﷻ mentions her final words in Sūrah at-Tahrīm as follows:

And Allah presents an example of those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said: 'My Lord! Build for me near You a house in Paradise, and save me from Pharaoh and his conduct, and save me from the wrongdoing people.' [7]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

The lives of the Prophets ﷺ teach us to put our full trust in Allah ﷻ during difficult situations. With a partner, think of two other Prophets ﷺ who had to overcome some hardship. What was their trial? How did they teach us to trust Allah ﷻ? Present your answers to the class in a short presentation.

UNDERSTANDING THE MERCY (RAḤMAH) OF ALLAH ﷻ THROUGH THIS STORY

Prophet Mūsā's mother loved her son so much, however, she obeyed Allah's ﷻ command to cast him into the water so that he could live. She did this despite not knowing that she would eventually be reunited with her son. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: "Then We restored you to your mother, that she might be comforted and not grieve." [8]

We can see in this story that Prophet Mūsā's mother showed her trust in Allah ﷻ by following His commands. If we trust in Allah ﷻ during our times of difficulties—while acting on our responsibilities—then Allah ﷻ will provide for us in every way as well. He says in the Qurʾān:

And whoever is conscious of Allah, He will make for them a way out (give them relief from their difficulties). And provide for them from where they do not expect. And whoever puts their trust in Allah, He is sufficient for them. Indeed, Allah carries through His commands. Certainly, Allah has ordained a measure [and extent] for everything. [9]

The loss or separation of a child from one's mother is a loss we cannot even imagine. It is hard for both the child and the mother to bear, and the mother is understandably deeply saddened and heartbroken. The Qurʾān narrates that Prophet Mūsā's mother was saddened as well, but out of His Mercy, Allah ﷻ not only reunited this mother and her son, but in such a unique way that Prophet Mūsā's mother was even paid to take care of her own son!

We know that Allah ﷻ is 70 times more merciful than a mother, and has that much more love for His creatures, so we can only imagine how much we can benefit from trying to gain closeness to Him. If Prophet Mūsā's mother was grieved and saddened at the separation from her son, we must feel the same way when we do something that takes us away from Allah ﷻ.

6 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P.36. The four women of Paradise according to the Prophet ﷺ are: Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ, Lady Khadījah ﷺ, Lady Maryam, the mother of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ, and Lady Āsiyah.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tahrīm (66), Verse 11.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verse 40.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah aṭ-Ṭalāq (65), Verses 2-3.

PROPHET MŪSĀ ﷺ GROWS UP

Prophet Mūsā ﷺ grew up as a beloved member of Pharaoh's family. However, due to some circumstances, when he was a youth he had to flee from his hometown because of some threats he received. He was wandering all alone, and had neither food, nor water. When he reached a city called Madyan, he saw a group of shepherds watering their sheep next to a well, and two ladies standing far away from the well with empty buckets in their hands. He asked them why they stood at a distance? The Qurʾān narrates this as follows:

He (Mūsā) said: 'What is the matter with you?' They said: 'We cannot water (our flocks) until the shepherds take (their flocks). And our father is a very old man.' [10]

On hearing their reply, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ filled their buckets, and watered their flock for them, then he took shelter under a tree. He was very exhausted from the long journey. He had nothing to eat, nor drink. He prayed to Allah ﷻ: "My Lord! Indeed, I am in need of whatever good You bestow upon me!" [11]

It was only a matter of time when one of two sisters whom he had previously helped came back to Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, and said to him: "Verily, my father calls you that he may reward you for having watered (our flocks) for us." [12]

Prophet Mūsā ﷺ was surprised. He asked the woman to walk behind him and give him directions where to go, rather than walking in front of him. This modesty that Prophet Mūsā ﷺ demonstrated was a result of his being God-conscious. When they reached the house of Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ, who was the father of the two sisters, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ explained to him the story of why he had to flee from Egypt. Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ guaranteed Prophet Mūsā ﷺ safety in Madyan. Seeing his piety and character, Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ offered him to marry one of his daughters. Prophet Mūsā ﷺ agreed, and remained serving Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ for ten years thereafter.

CONCLUSION

The details mentioned in this lesson are prime examples of lessons we can learn from the life of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, and some of the various hardships that he had to face. They serve as true inspiration to help us increase our trust toward Allah ﷻ even in our most different moments.

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 23.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 24.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 25.

Activity 3.2a: Review Questions

1. What is the difference between revelation and inspiration?

2. Summarize the story of the marriage of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ.

3. Using the story of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, explain the meaning of the Mercy *(Raḥmah)* of Allah ﷻ.

4. How many times does the Noble Qurʾān mention Prophet Mūsā ﷺ? Find one verse that was not spoken about in this lesson where his name appears, and write down the translation.

5. How did Allah ﷻ reunite Prophet Mūsā ﷺ with his mother?

Activity 3.2b: Organizing Information

Put the following list into the column of either inspiration or revelation:

- Where bees make their homes.
- Injīl of Prophet ʿIsā ﷺ.
- The Noble Qurʾān.
- Intrinsic motivation to do good.
- The ability of animals to know where to get their food.
- The mother of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ being told to put her baby in a basket, then into the river.

INSPIRATION	REVELATION

Activity 3.2c:
How much does Allah ﷻ do for all of humanity?

Allah's mercy is so grand, that oftentimes human beings take it for granted. Just like many people take their mother's love for granted even though she cares for her children in a way that no one else ever does. Create a comic strip depicting a story of which portrays the mercy of Allah ﷻ. Think about all of the blessings in our lives that Allah ﷻ has given us. Use the rubric below to ensure you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand.	Most of the graphics are related to the topic.	Most of the graphics are related to the topic, and make it easy to understand.	All of the graphics are directly related to the topic.
Grammar	There are 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There are 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There are 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There are no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles and Accuracy	Content does not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content meets the Islamic Principles, however, there is a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented meets almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented meets all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	The comic was distractingly messy, and/or lacked design.	The comic presented was somewhat creative, but left the audience wanting more in terms of design and neatness.	The comic was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	The comic was presented in an engaging and catchy manner in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The comic was not at all convincing or compelling.	The comic was not very convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not function as a comic strip.	The comic was extremely compelling and convincing.

3.3 Prophet Mūsā ﷺ on the Other Side

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand some various roles of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ.
- Learn about the mission of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ through the Noble Qurʾān ﷺ.
- Demonstrate the ungratefulness that the Children of Isrāʾīl (known in Arabic as Banī Isrāʾīl) showed toward the blessings of Allah ﷻ that He kept bestowing upon them. Banī means 'Children' and Isrāʾīl was another name given to Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ, so Banī Isrāʾīl means the 'Children of Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ' or the 'Children of Isrāʾīl' as they are often referred to.
- Understand and explain the concept of idol worshiping, despite the Mercy of Allah ﷻ during the time of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ.

IN THE LAST LESSON, we saw that the king of Egypt, known as the Pharaoh, regarded himself as the divine (god) in the religion of ancient Egypt. During this time, the people of Egypt favored a superstitious belief system over a monotheistic belief system. The Children of Isrāʾīl were enslaved, and Allah ﷻ sent Prophet Mūsā ﷺ as a Messenger to their tribe.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRĀʾĪL LEAVE EGYPT

Unlike the Biblical records of this story, the Noble Qurʾān focuses only on the historical aspects of this incident in which important lessons can be derived. Despite the lack of details or timeline in the Qurʾān, there are numerous things that can be learned from the actions of the Children of Isrāʾīl toward their Prophet ﷺ.

Prophet Mūsā ﷺ had two roles: The first was to invite people to worship the One True God, Allah ﷻ; and the second was to stop the Pharaoh from oppressing the Children of Isrāʾīl. Prophet Mūsā ﷺ called on Pharaoh and his followers to avoid false worship, and warned them about Allah's wrath. In response to this, they rose up and slandered Prophet Mūsā ﷺ. They accused him of being a madman and a sorcerer. Pharaoh and his people refused to submit to Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, even though many afflictions and warnings were sent their way. Prophet Mūsā ﷺ warned Pharaoh and the Egyptian people to abandon polytheism. Despite these warnings, they did not listen to him. Allah ﷻ then ordered Prophet Mūsā ﷺ to take the Children of Isrāʾīl and flee from Egypt. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

Then We revealed to Mūsā, [saying]: 'Set out with My servants at night; indeed, you all will be pursued.' Then Pharaoh sent heralds to the cities [proclaiming]: 'These are indeed a small band, and they have surely aroused our wrath, and we are alert and fully prepared.' So We took them out of gardens and springs, and [made them leave behind] treasures and honorable stations. Thus it was; and We bequeathed them to the Children of Isrāʾīl. Then they pursued them at sunrise. [1]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shuʿarāʾ(26), Verses 52-60.

The two groups met at the edge of the sea following this pursuit. Allah ﷻ separated the sea, and saved Prophet Mūsā ﷺ and the believers with him, and destroyed Pharaoh and his people by drowning them. This has been narrated in the Qurʾān as follows:

Thereafter, We revealed to Mūsā: 'Strike the sea with your staff!' Then it parted, and each part was as if it were a great mountain. And We brought the others near, and We delivered Mūsā and all those who were with him (to safety). Then We drowned the others. Indeed, in that (there) is a sign, but most of them did not have faith. And indeed, your Lord is the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful. [2]

Once they were saved from the oppression of Pharaoh and his followers, the Children of Isrāʾīl were free. They could practice their Monotheistic religion and worship Allah ﷻ freely. They were commanded to go to Palestine, and practice the true religion of submission to One God, Allah ﷻ.

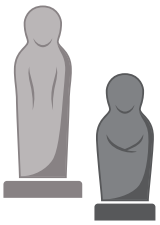
ON THE OTHER SIDE

As we see from the story above, the next part of the mission of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ was to protect his people from straying from the path of belief in the One True God.

As the Children of Isrāʾīl travelled through the desert toward Palestine, Allah ﷻ supplied them with fresh meat, and pleasant sweet food *(al-manna wa as-salwā)*. This was a specific kind of food, said to be very delicious, and sent to them from Allah ﷻ whenever they wanted it. However, soon they began to complain, and asked Prophet Mūsā ﷺ to provide them with a variety of foods such as onions, garlic, and so on. This was a sign of their rejection of the blessings of Allah ﷻ.

And remember when you said: 'O Mūsā! We can never endure (only) one (kind of) food. So invoke your Lord to bring forth for us of what the earth grows, its green herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils, and its onions.' He (Mūsā) said: 'Would you exchange what is better for that which is lower? Go down to any town, and you shall find what you want!' [3]

IDOL WORSHIPING



When they came across a group of people worshiping idols, the Children of Isrāʾīl asked Prophet Mūsā ﷺ to make an idol for them to worship. They also asked him to show Allah ﷻ to them physically. They could not comprehend that Allah ﷻ was beyond vision, hearing, and shape. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

And We brought the Children of Isrāʾīl (with safety) across the sea, and they came upon a people devoted to some of their idols (in worship). They said: 'O Mūsā! Make for us a god as they have gods.' He said: 'Verily, you are people behaving ignorantly. Verily, these people will be destroyed for that which they are engaged in (idol worshiping); and all that they are doing is in vain.' [4]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why did the tribe of Banī Isrāʾīl want to worship a physical God? How does this show their ungratefulness toward Allah ﷻ?

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shuʿarāʾ (26), Verses 63-68.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 61.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verses 138-139.

Activity 3.3a: Popular Culture

With a partner, think of popular culture nowadays. In what ways does popular culture promote worshiping idols? How is this a form of polytheism *(shirk)*? Fill in the following graphic organizer to help organize your thoughts. The first one is completed for you as an example.

CURRENT POP CULTURE TREND	ASSOCIATION TO WORSHIPING IDOLS	WHAT DOES ISLAM SAY?
Imitating celebrities, who are sometimes referred to as "idols."	Hanging up posters of them, dressing like them, imitating them, following everything they say or do on social media.	Take role models who will lift you in your faith *(īmān)*, and bring you closer to Allah ﷻ, such as the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

After travelling with his people for some time, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ was commanded by the Almighty to isolate and dedicate himself to worshiping Allah ﷻ. He left his people and informed them about his plan to return in 30 days. While in isolation, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ was commanded to extend his stay by ten days, to a total of 40 days.[5] When he did not return after 30 days, his tribe became agitated. A person by the name of as-Sāmirī took advantage of this situation. He created a cow that was made of gold which emitted a sound, and he encouraged the people to worship this idol.

Even though he was only ten days late, many of the people took up the worship of this cow-shaped idol. When Prophet Mūsā ﷺ returned, he was furious with his brother Hārūn (whom he had left the people under the care of), and the Children of Isrāʾīl. He destroyed the idol, and punished as-Sāmirī. Yet again, his people failed their test.

The Noble Qurʾān narrates this event as follows:

Then Mūsā returned to his people in a state of anger and sorrow. He said: 'O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a fair promise? Did the time (of the promise's fulfillment) seem too long in coming? Or did you desire the wrath from your Lord to descend on you, so you broke your promise (of obedience) to me?' …Mūsā said: 'And what is the matter with you, O Sāmiri (why did you do this)? He (Sāmirī) said: 'I saw what you did not see, so I took a handful (of dust) from the track of the messenger (some hoof-print in the sand left by Angel Jibrāʾīl) and threw it. Thus my inner-self (my soul) suggested to me.' He (Mūsā) said: 'Then go away! And verily, your punishment in this life will be that you will say: 'Do not touch me' (meaning that he was to be shunned by all people)… [6]

STOP AND REFLECT: The above verses show the feelings of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ when he returned to his people. How do you think Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ is currently feeling in occultation? What can we do while we wait for our Imām ﷺ so that he is not being hurt the way other representatives of Allah ﷻ were?

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verse 142.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verses 86 and then 95-97.

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: "Surely those who believe, and those who were Jews, or Christians, or Sabians, and those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and do good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there will be no fear for them, nor shall they grieve." [7]

It is evident that the Bible of Christianity (known as the New Testament) and the Torah of Judaism (known as the Old Testament to Christians) have been changed or altered. The Bible was written many years after Prophet Īsā ﷺ was raised to Heaven. It might have some remnants of what they remembered from the Injīl, the Book of Prophet Īsā ﷺ, but it is imperfect. Similarly, although the Torah might have some remnants of the Tawrāh in it, it is also changed from the original book that Prophet Mūsā ﷺ was given. These books had been altered before even the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ; however, his book, the Qurʾān, has been guaranteed by Allah ﷻ Himself to remain unaltered until the end of time and has been sent down for all of humanity. Additionally, the Bible is a collection of writings by many different authors, whereas the Qurʾān is a dictation, and the literal words of Allah ﷻ through revelation.

As Muslims, we are all unanimous on what the Noble Qurʾān is, and what is in the Noble Qurʾān. Even though it was revealed over 1,400 years ago, it is still intact in the exact same way that it was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and will always remain so. There is only one version of it, and that is the original version. Even when archaeologists find some of the oldest versions of the Noble Qurʾān from around the Prophet's time, the words and text have always been the exact same.

The Christians and Jews had been told that there would be another Prophet who would come, and they had even learned some of the characteristics of this final Messenger. One of the companions of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, Salmān al-Fārisī, had learned about the characteristics of the Noble Prophet ﷺ from Christian monks. He recognized the truth of the final Prophet when he heard about him, and even though he lived so far away from Mecca, he undertook a difficult journey to reach the Prophet ﷺ, and became Muslim after meeting him.

One of the main events in the story of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ is that of the Children of Isrāʾīl rejecting the truth even after recognizing it. Similarly, many of the Christians and Jews—who lived during the time of the final Prophet ﷺ—only believed in some of their own teachings, and they failed to recognize that the prophecies about a final Prophet were being realized in the form of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. A lot of the people who remained Jews and Christians stood against the Prophet ﷺ, even fighting against him in battle.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss why even now people reject the truth or portions of the truth. Write down ideas of why you think this is, and if possible include some *aḥādīth* or *āyāt* of the Noble Qurʾān.

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 62.

Activity 3.3b: Demonstrate Your Knowledge

Create a digital presentation answering the following questions. Be as creative as you can with the presentation, and make sure that any citations or quotations have been sourced. Consult the rubric before beginning.

- Why were the stories of the Children of Isrāʾīl leaving Egypt, and idol worshiping specifically mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān?
- What specific lessons can we learn from them?
- What are some practical applications of these lessons that we can learn and apply in our daily lives?

Use the rubric below to ensure that you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 **Ineffective**	**2** **Somewhat Effective**	**3** **Considerably Effective**	**4** **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand, and/or have no sources.	Most of the graphics relate to the topic, and some of them have a source cited.	Most of the graphics are related to the topic, and make it easier to understand. All of the graphics have a source cited.	All of the graphics directly relate to the topic, and all of them have a source cited.
Grammar	There are 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There are 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There are 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There are no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles and Accuracy	Content does not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content meets the Islamic Principles, however there is a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented meets almost all of the Islamic Principles, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented meets all of the Islamic Principles, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Presentation was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Presentation had some creativity, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Presentation was given in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Presentation was given in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The presentation was not convincing or compelling.	The presentation was somewhat convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not function as a presentation.	The presentation was extremely compelling and convincing.

CHAPTER 4

Contemporary Muslims

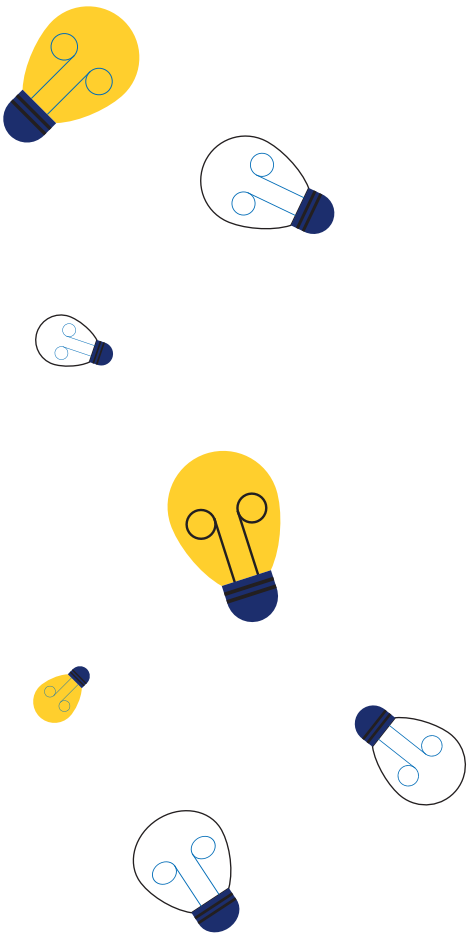
4.1 Scholars: Our connection to the Maʿṣūmīn ﷺ

4.1 Scholars: Our connection to the Maʿṣūmīn ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define the role that the scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* play in keeping us connected to the *Maʿṣūmīn* ﷺ.
- Explain the need to always have a connection with the scholars.
- Analyze both the minor and major occultations *(ghaybahs)* of our 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, and identify the differences between them.
- Discover how love of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ can lead a person to Paradise.



Activity 4.1a: Pre-Reading Reflection

What steps does it take for a light bulb to work? What would happen if you tried to connect a light bulb directly to the powerhouse? How can this analogy help us to understand our connection to the *Maʿṣūmīn* ﷺ through the scholars?

Allah ﷻ is with us all of the time, and without His presence we would be nothing, so we need Him every moment of our lives. But just like a lightbulb, we also need to have the help of those who are better connected to Allah ﷻ who can then guide us to connect to Him. Such people reflect the beauty and perfection of Allah ﷻ and help us to know Him better. While the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is in *ghaybah*, we do not have direct access to him in order to gain knowledge or benefit from him. Therefore, the scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* are our connection to the *Maʿṣūmīn* ﷺ during this time, and they use their knowledge of Islam and the Qur'ān to guide us.

The Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ often had people represent them or take on important tasks on behalf of them. An example of this that we read about earlier was that of Bilāl. He was a companion of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and was trusted as the first treasurer of Islam.[1] Another example is how Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ appointed Muslim ibn Aqīl to represent him in Kūfah as a messenger to see whether the people there were ready for him to arrive or not.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think the Imāms ﷺ appointed representatives even if they were not in occultation?

1 Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Ar-Rijāl*, P. 189.

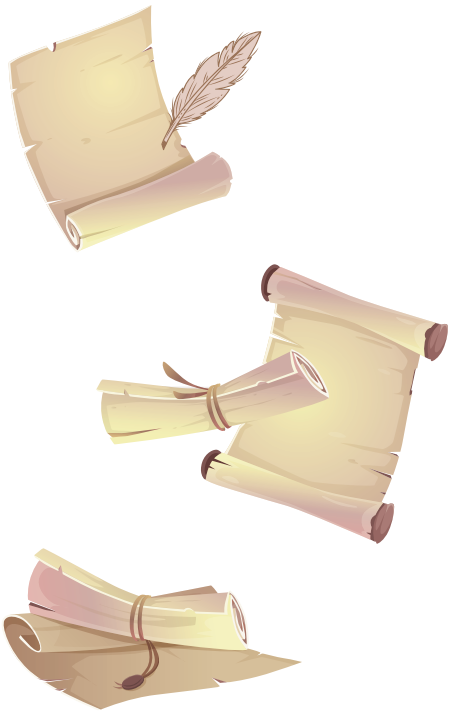
OPPRESSION OF THE IMĀMS ﷺ

Most of the Imāms ﷺ were not allowed to uphold their place as the leader of the Islamic government because there were other tyrants who were constantly usurping this from them. For example, during the time of the Imamate of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, Muʿāwiyah was constantly trying to gain complete power over the nation.

During the time of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ and Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, the first Islamic Seminaries and study circles were organized in the city of Baghdād. The caliph during the time of the 5th Imām ﷺ, whose name was ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, was very sympathetic toward the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. He returned Fadak—the land that was taken away from Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ—to Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ, and allowed the Imām ﷺ to teach Islam in peace. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was succeeded by Hishām ibn ʿAbdul Malik, who was a very tyrannical ruler. At the time, Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ had around 2000 students learning Jurisprudence *(Fiqh)*, Theology *(ʿAqāʾid)*, and other Islamic Sciences. Hishām grew increasingly frustrated that Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ had that many students, so he had him poisoned.

After some time, the Umayyad dynasty started to fade, and their weakened political power allowed Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣadiq ﷺ to openly teach again. Students became experts in different Islamic Sciences such as: Transmitted Knowledge *(ʿUlūm an-Naqliyyah)*, Intellectual Knowledge *(ʿUlūm al-ʿAqlīyyah)*, and Natural Sciences *(ʿUlūm at-Tabiʿīyyah)*.

After Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ, the other Imāms ﷺ began to have *wakīls* (deputies) who would act on behalf of them. These *wakīls* would answer questions and teach people on behalf of the Imāms ﷺ. Part of the wisdom behind this was that there would be examples of representatives throughout history so that when the 12th Imām عجل الله فرجه went into occultation, people would have precedents to refer to. The history of our *ʿulamāʾ* today began with the Minor Occultation *(Ghaybah aṣ-Ṣughrā)*.



GHAYBAH AṢ-ṢUGHRĀ:
Minor Occultation

GHAYBAH AL-KUBRĀ:
Major Occultation

MINOR OCCULTATION AND MAJOR OCCULTATION

When Imām Ḥasan al-Askari ﷺ was martyred on the 8th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal in the year 260 AH, Imām al-Mahdi عجل الله فرجه led his funeral prayer. The Minor Occultation *(Ghaybah aṣ-Ṣughrā)* began with this event. It is called "minor" because it was shorter than the Major Occultation, which began in the year 329 AH, and continues until today.

In the Minor Occultation, the Imām عجل الله فرجه appointed four ambassadors to be his representatives. These representatives were known to be in direct contact with the Imām عجل الله فرجه. Being a representative of the 12th Imām عجل الله فرجه was an important responsibility because most of the Shīʿahs did not have access to the Imām عجل الله فرجه at that time. These four individuals were renowned for their knowledge and God-consciousness *(taqwā)*.

The four representatives were:

- ʿUthmān ibn Saʿīd al-Asadī al-ʿAmrī
- Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān
- Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ an-Nawbakhtī
- ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad as-Samarī.

They were responsible for acting as representatives of the Imām ﷺ in taking care of the needs of the Shīʿahs. They would sometimes take people to see Imām al-Mahdi ﷺ, or they would take their letters to the Imām ﷺ and come back with replies from him. They protected the Shīʿahs from further splits by proving the *Imāmah* of the 12th Imām ﷺ. They also managed the financial system of *khums*, *zakāh*, etc., for the final Imām ﷺ.

Right before life of the fourth representative came to an end, he received a letter from the Imām ﷺ, saying:

May Allah give good rewards to your brothers for [mourning for] you (i.e. on your death), for indeed you shall die after six days. So prepare your affairs, and do not appoint anyone to take your place after your death. For the second occultation has now started, and there can be no appearance until, after a long time when Allah gives His permission, the hearts become hardened, and the world becomes filled with injustice. Someone shall come to my people (Shīʿahs) claiming that he has seen me [and is my representative]; but beware of anyone claiming to have seen me before the rise of as-Sufyāni, and the outcry from the sky, for he shall be a slanderous liar. [2]

Six days after receiving this letter, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad as-Samarī completed his pending tasks, made his will, and breathed his last. This was in the year 329 AH, and it marked the beginning of *al-Ghaybah al-Kubrā*—the Major Occultation.[3]

The time that we are living in today is *Ghaybah al-Kubrā*. The responsibilities that were carried through by the appointed representatives of the 12th Imām ﷺ during the Minor Occultation still remain. Believers need access to an Imām ﷺ, and the source of knowledge to manage their affairs according to Allah's teaching. Many of the responsibilities of the representatives of the Imām ﷺ are carried out by the scholars of today. The pious and true scholars fulfill this role because they study in the Islamic Seminary (*Ḥawzah),* and apply the knowledge which they attain in their own lives. They have the responsibility of carrying the load of people's questions, education, spiritual guidance, and matrimonial/ family affairs because they meet the qualities mentioned by the Imāms ﷺ.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE ḤAWZAH

Baghdād continued to be a center of Islamic knowledge, and was where the representatives or their followers taught the Shīʿahs in secret during the Minor Occultation. A *Ḥawzāh* is a school or a seminary where a person can study the Islamic Sciences, and it first began in Baghdād. It started as small groups of students, and slowly grew over time. The scholars dedicate their entire lives to learning a wide variety of Islamic Sciences, and practice what they learn.

During the time of the Minor Occultation, the four major *ḥadīth* books of the Shīʿahs were compiled: *Al-Kāfī* by Shaykh Kulaynī, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh* by Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* by Shaykh Ṭūsī, and *Al-Istibṣār* also by Shaykh Ṭūsī. This was a very difficult task, because many of the *ḥadīth* of the Imāms ﷺ were scattered, so scholars often had to travel far to compile them; and there were no computers, photocopy places, nor print shops around!

2 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl ad-Din*, Vol. 2, P. 516; *Al-Iḥtijāj*, Vol. 2, Pp. 555-556.
3 Nuʿmānī, *Al-Ghaybah*, P. 395.

Activity 4.1b: Create a Timeline

Using the information presented in this lesson and additional research, create a timeline of the important events starting with the Major Occultation *(Ghaybah al-Kubrā)*. Use the rubric below as a guide.

The timeline can be presented in the form of a poster or digitally, with appropriate graphics where applicable.

	1 **Ineffective**	**2** **Somewhat Effective**	**3** **Considerably Effective**	**4** **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand, and/or had no sources.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and most of them cited a source.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand; and all of them had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all of the borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Creativity	Timeline was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Timeline was presented somewhat creatively, but it lacked in design and neatness.	Timeline was presented in an engaging manner, but it lacked neatness.	Timeline was presented in an engaging and catchy manner in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality/Accuracy	Timeline information presented was not too accurate.	Timeline presented lacked accuracy and quality.	Timeline presented was somewhat accurate, but still lacked quality work.	Timeline presented was extremely compelling and accurate.

ʿULAMĀʾ SPOTLIGHT: SHAYKH MUFĪD

Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nuʿmān—more commonly known as Shaykh Mufīd—was born on 11th Dhul Qaʿdah, 336 AH near Baghdād, Iraq. Even when he was quite young, he was very interested in learning more about Islam, and had several teachers. Shaykh Mufīd had deep knowledge of Islamic Jurisprudence *(Fiqh)*, but was also a great literary figure, historian, theologian, and traditionalist.

When he was at the age of 16, he went to see a scholar, by the name of ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā al-Rummānī, to speak to him about theology, as his own teacher, Abu Yāsir, told him to do this. Al-Rummānī's class was attended by many of the great scholars of that time. Shaykh Mufīd saw that the arrival of a man from Baṣrah was announced. ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā and his visitor from Baṣrah spoke for quite some time. Then, the visitor asked ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā what he had to say about the events of Ghadīr Khumm and the Cave, thus he replied:

"The tradition of the Cave is definite knowledge *(dirāyah),* while the tradition of Ghadīr is (of the status) of a narration *(riwāyah)*. A narration *(riwāyah)* does not require the same (acceptance) as definite knowledge *(dirāyah)*." The Baṣran could not find an answer to this, so he departed.

When the crowd grew smaller, the young Shaykh Mufīd approached ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā and said to him: "O Shaykh, I have a question."

"Put it forward," replied ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā.

"What would you say about someone who fought against a just Imām?" asked Shaykh Mufīd.

"He is an unbeliever *(kāfir)*," was the answer. Then, after a pause he changed it to "grave sinner *(fāsiq)*."

Shaykh then asked him: "What do you say about the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib?"

ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā replied: "He was an Imām."

"What do you say about the Battle of the Camel, and some of the companions who fought against ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib? According to the above argument, they should be described as grave sinners *(fāsiq)* who will go to Hell!"

"They repented."

"The tradition of the Battle of the Camel is definite knowledge *(dirāyah),* while the tradition of the repentance is a narration *(riwāyah)*," replied Shaykh Mufīd.

Thus, Shaykh Mufīd turned the tables on him. The event of the Cave was something that all Muslims accepted as a fact, but there was no point in giving the well-reported tradition of Ghadīr Khumm inferior status, since if this was done, then the same terminology could be used to question the repentance of the said companions, which was also accepted by most Muslims.

ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā was very impressed by the young man's reasoning. He asked him about his teacher, then gave him a note to take to that man. In the note, he praised the intellect of this boy, and gave him the nickname of *al-Mufīd* which means "the one who gives benefit."[4]

Shaykh Mufīd once had a dream in which he saw Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﵄ come to him with her two young children, Imām Ḥasan ﵇ and Imām Ḥusayn ﵇, and she said to him: "O my Shaykh, teach *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) to these two boys of mine!"[5] He woke up and was astonished at the dream. The next day, a woman named Fāṭimah, the mother of Sayyid Murtaḍā and Sayyid Raḍī, came to the door of Shaykh Mufīd and asked him to be her sons' teacher, in the same way that Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﵄ had asked him in his dream. This shows us the pure intentions and status of Shaykh Mufīd, his students, and their mother.

Among the students of Shaykh Mufīd was Shaykh Tūsī who compiled two of the four major *ḥadīth* books that we use as reference up until today. He moved to Baghdād at the age of 23, and started to attend classes under the guidance of Shaykh Mufīd and Sayyid Murtaḍā.

AL-MUFĪD: the one who gives benefit

4 Warrām ibn Abī Firās, *Majmūʿah Warrām*, Vol. 2, P. 302.
5 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Mazār*, Vol. 1, P. 6.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCHING RELIGION

A person must investigate one's religion and learn more about it.

> Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:
> "When a person commits a sin, a knowledgeable person is guilty of one sin, whereas an ignorant person is guilty of two (i.e, the sin itself, and the sin of ignorance)." [6]

We might think that being ignorant is a good excuse! True, in some cases when ignorance is excusable, it may be forgiven. However, in some cases, we see that inexcusable ignorance can be a sin. We are obliged to learn about our practical responsibilities. If we commit a sin in regard to something that we should have known and we could have learnt about, then we will be accountable for that sin, as well as be questioned about why we did not know (or research) that it was a sin. As Muslims, we must know our religion at least to the point of knowing our daily responsibilities, and the *ḥalāl/ḥarām*. The great gnostic *('ārif)*, Āyatullāh Bahjat, made a recommendation that we should dedicate at least one hour a day to learn about our religion. If that is not possible, then at least one hour a week, as that will make a huge difference.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

How did Shaykh Mufīd demonstrate a respect for knowledge and understanding?

Through his actions, especially in his sincerity with which he researched Islamic Laws and gave rulings, Shaykh Mufīd became an exemplar for the *'ulamā'* and the people of his times. He paid special attention to the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and they showed him special mercy and love in directly guiding his actions.

In the year 447 AH, the *Ḥawzah* of Baghdād was destroyed in an attack by Tughril Bey Saljūqī. Many Shī'ahs were killed, and the libraries of Sayyid Murtaḍā, Shaykh Tūsī, and Bahā ad-Dawlah Dilāmī's vizier were burned. After this, many great scholars had to move to other cities, and Shaykh Tūsī founded the *Ḥawzah* in Najaf, Iraq.

STOP AND REFLECT: How might our knowledge of Islam be vastly different today if it was not for the creation of these *Ḥawzahs*?

6 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Amālī*, P. 228.

Activity 4.1c: Reflection

1. How did Shaykh Mufīd demonstrate that the love of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ will lead a person to Paradise?

2. How can we demonstrate love of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in our daily lives? Provide practical examples that YOU can try to implement in your daily life.

AKHLĀQ
(ETIQUETTE)

CHAPTER 1

Mind, Body and Soul

1.1 Practically Achieving Our Purpose

1.2 Happiness Through a Balanced Lifestyle

1.3 Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence

1.1 Practically Achieving Our Purpose

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Compare and contrast false understandings of happiness with true happiness.
- Explain how we can be happy even during difficult times.
- Recognize how to build good habits to achieve our purpose in life.
- Identify steps for reflection in our daily lives.

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN SHIRT

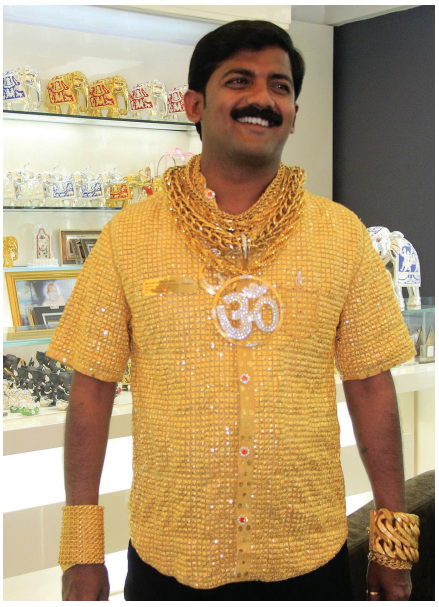
In 2012, an Indian businessman became famous for getting a shirt made that was worth 12.7 million rupees—$240,000 at the time—which consisted of 14,000 pieces of 22-karat gold! The man was proud of himself, and he wanted to do something that would spread his name across India. It was said to break the world record for the most expensive shirt ever made. "I want to be famous throughout the country," he admitted when asked about the shirt. He was particularly fascinated with gold, and was frequently seen wearing gold rings, bracelets, and medallions.

Activity 1.1a: Summarizing Questions

1. How do you think other people around him felt about him?

2. Once he had this shirt made, do you think he found happiness?

3. Why would he want to use his money on a gold shirt?

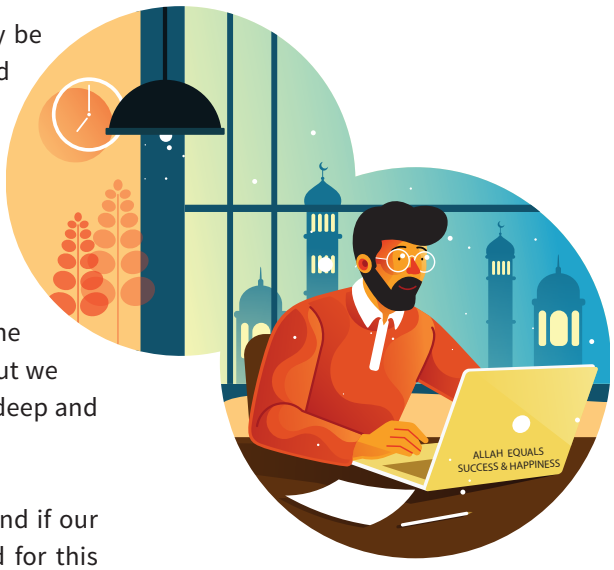


Datta Phuge gained fame when he ordered a customised gold shirt worth 12.7 million rupees, around $240,000

In 2016, this man was murdered by a group of men. They were upset with him because of some business deals that had gone bad.

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think makes a person truly happy? What story from the Qurʾān does this news item remind you of?

TRUE HAPPINESS



When we look at the above example of the man with the gold shirt, it may be obvious that his desire for the shirt was silly. Although we may never spend money on a gold shirt, if we are not careful, we may act similarly by working toward goals that will never make us truly happy.

For example, if we set our goal to be the best doctor in the world, we might work long hours and neglect our family responsibilities. If we set our goal of having the nicest house in the world, we might spend more money than we have just to try to reach that goal. If we set our goal to be entertained to the maximum extent possible, we might think that we have found happiness, but we are actually preventing ourselves from what we truly need in life which is a deep and close connection to Allah ﷻ.

Nothing can make us happy if we do not have a connection with Allah ﷻ, and if our goal is anything other than success in the Hereafter! We were not created for this world, but rather for the next. Everything in this world is temporary and limited.

The story of the Indian businessman reminds us about the story of Qārūn. The Qurʾān describes him as taking credit for his own financial success. He used to flaunt his wealth in front of others; and this obsession took him further away from Allah ﷻ, until eventually he turned against the Prophet ﷺ of his time, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, and was punished by Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says the following about him in the Qurʾān:

Indeed, Qārūn belonged to the people of Mūsā, but he bullied them. We had given him so many treasures that their chests indeed proved heavy for a band of strong men. When his people said to him: 'Do not boast! Indeed Allah does not like the boasters.'... He replied: 'I have indeed been given [all of] this because of the knowledge that I have... So We caused the earth to swallow him and his house, and he had no party that might protect him from Allah, nor was he of those who could defend themselves. [1]

According to some traditions, Qārūn did not start out this way. He used to be one of the most devout followers of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ and was quite humble and poor. However, as he started to earn a lot of wealth, he went down the wrong path.

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF HAPPINESS

When we reflect on the story of Lady Zaynab ﷺ, we know that when she was in the courtyard of ibn Ziyād—after the loss of her family, especially the Imām and her dear brother, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, and not being able to properly bury, mourn or cry for them—she stood up in front of everyone and said the following famous line in reference to the day of ʿAshūraʾ:

"I saw nothing except beauty." [2]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verses 76-81.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 45, P. 114.

Happiness and success are much more than what we may or may not have

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think Lady Zaynab ﷺ said this line?

We know that she had gone through so many difficulties in the land of Karbalāʾ, and on the journey to Kūfa, and that she had a great responsibility on her shoulders. She had to give care and love to the children, and also support Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ.

Someone who looks at her situation might wonder: How could Lady Zaynab ﷺ see anything positive about her life at that point? How could she see beauty in so much suffering? How could she feel successful despite having lost so much?

The example of Lady Zaynab ﷺ teaches us that happiness and success are much deeper than just focusing on what we have or what we may not have. What enabled her to be successful and happy was her contentment that she was on the right path, and her closeness to Allah ﷻ. Due to this close relationship with Allah ﷻ, she saw His presence in everything that happened around her—and she understood that He is the Source of all beauty!

When we go through different tests in life, we should remember the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and learn from their examples of how to act during difficulties. Various situations may arise in our lives that can be a test for us: Not getting what we want, trying to control our anger, having to choose things that go against the majority, writing a very difficult exam, etc., but these are all trials for us that we have to go through in life. It can be extremely challenging to control our thoughts and emotions when we do not know what is going to happen in the future, but we have to remember that Allah ﷻ knows what is best for us. Success and happiness do not come about by becoming rich and popular, although rich and popular people can be successful. However, true success and happiness comes through trying to become closer to Allah ﷻ—both in good times and difficult times.

BUILDING GOOD HABITS

It is easy to say that we want to get closer to Him, but how can we actually ensure we are moving in that direction in our lives? How can we avoid becoming like Qārūn, or the other examples that the Qurʾān gives us of people (like Balʿam ibn Bāʿūrāʾ[3] and Firʿawn) throughout history who chose a path away from Him?

3 Balʿam ibn Bāʿūrāʾ, like Qārūn and Firʿawn, chose a path away from Allah ﷻ, despite being shown His signs as mentioned in Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, Verses 175-176. During the time of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, he was a devout worshiper of Allah ﷻ, and because of this he was granted *'Ismi Aʿẓam'*—the special name of Allah ﷻ which can fulfill any *duʿā'*. As a result, he would often make *duʿā'* for himself and anyone who asked him. One day, his villagers came to him after learning that Prophet Mūsā ﷺ had gathered an army to bring the message of Allah ﷻ to them. The villagers asked him to pray that something bad would happen to Prophet Mūsā's army so they would not have to accept the message of Allah ﷻ. At first, Balʿam ibn Bāʿūrāʾ refused because he was a devout worshiper, so he said he would not pray against the Messenger of Allah ﷻ. He was eventually convinced by the people, and planned to go to the top of a mountain to make his *duʿā'*. When his donkey became aware of his plan, he stopped in his tracks and refused to take him any further, so he was forced to travel by foot. Once at the top of the mountain, he was unable to speak because his tongue got stuck between his teeth. He gave the villagers an alternate way to distract the army of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, however within a short period of time, Allah ﷻ sent down a disease that killed thousands of people, including Balʿam ibn Bāʿūrāʾ.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can we move in a direction that will please Allah ﷻ and the Imām of our Time عجل الله فرجه الشريف?

Allah ﷻ has given us the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام as guides for us, and our intellect *(ʿaql)* as our inner guide, but we should not think that the exact path is going to be laid out in front of us very easily. In order to find the right path, Islam teaches us two simple and practical, yet powerful actions that we should follow in order to help us on this path. These are known as *murāqabah*—which is watchfulness, and *muḥāsabah*—which means reflecting on and evaluating our own deeds. We can put these actions into practice by the following steps:

MURĀQABAH: watchfulness

BEGIN THE DAY IN THE RIGHT WAY

We should begin our day with an active intention to spend the day upholding ourselves with God-consciousness *(taqwā)*, and performing our responsibilities toward Allah ﷻ. This can start out by setting some practical goals about what we want to achieve, such as being careful to only say, hear, and see what is Islamically permissible.

BE VIGILANT

Throughout the day, we should actively monitor what we are doing, and make sure that we are holding ourselves to the goals we set. This means that we should perform all of our actions thoughtfully, instead of just doing them automatically (like being on auto-pilot mode).

REFLECT

We should end each day by spending a few minutes reflecting on our deeds from that day. Were we able to remain vigilant? Did we meet the goals that we set out at the beginning of the day? Maybe we became irritated with a friend or sibling, and said some mean words. Or we were not in our best behavior with a parent. Or we were not careful about what we were looking at when browsing online. Or we notice that for part of the day we were careful and observant, but for some of the day we were not. We should thank and praise Allah ﷻ for the good things that we did which He gave us the ability to perform; and we should ask for His forgiveness for any mistakes we made, have hope in His infinite mercy, and resolve to do better next time. If we harmed anyone during that day, then we should make sure to ask them for forgiveness. Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim عليه السلام said: *"The person who does not make oneself accountable every day is not from among us. If a person did (something) good, then they should ask Allah to increase their blessings, and if they did (something) bad, then they should repent to Allah, and ask for His forgiveness."*[4]

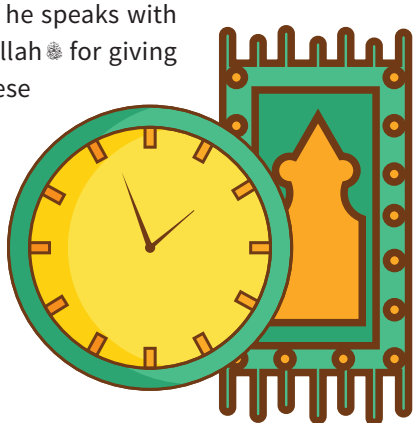
Murāqabah (watchfulness) and *muḥāsabah* (reflection on and evaluation of our deeds) work together like a cycle, meaning that as we reflect more about our actions, our watchfulness will increase; and as our watchfulness increases, our reflection will also be more beneficial. If we regularly implement these two actions in our lives, they can lead to impactful changes in our routines, and inshāʾAllāh they will become a means of finding the true path to Allah ﷻ.

4 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 453.

MUḤĀSABAH:
reflecting on and evaluating our deeds

If we do not reflect on our actions daily, then it will be very difficult for us to get better at being vigilant of ourselves. For example, if one day I offer my *ṣalāh* very late because I was not watchful over myself at prayer time, and I do not reflect on this action, then it will be quite easy to make the same mistake again. The next day, I might even be less watchful at the time of *ṣalāh*! Over time, it might become a daily habit for me to offer my *ṣalāh* late. I may even forget that offering *ṣalāh* on time is recommended, and this may lead me to consider *ṣalāh* as something that is not even important. This is the same for any mistake or bad deed that we perform. If I say something wrong or disrespectful to a friend one day, I might make the same mistake again repeatedly if I do not reflect on this action of mine.

On the other hand, let us look at an example of how watchfulness and reflection can help a person. Let us say that Mujtaba is trying to get better. The day before, he realized that he acted a bit harshly with his sibling because he was hungry and irritable. He also delayed praying his *ṣalāh* longer than he should have because he was playing a game. His goals for today are to pray on time, and to control his anger, even when he gets hungry. He sets an alarm for *ṣalāh* so that he does not forget to pray right on time, and he tries to eat earlier to avoid being hungry if he can help it. He is more watchful over himself at prayer time, and when he speaks with others today. At the end of the day, he thanks Allah ﷻ for giving him the opportunity to identify and address these problems. He asks for His help to persevere in being watchful and reflective.



Activity 1.1b: Review Questions

Mehek is a middle school student who carpools with her friends every day on her way back from school. She and her friends spend the brief walk from school to the car talking about their day. However, one of her friends has recently become very uncaring about her actions, and takes pride in arguing with their teacher and skipping her classes.

1. How can Mehek implement the three steps above in her own life to avoid falling victim to peer pressure?

2. How can she advise her friend to implement these steps to try and better herself?

Amin wants to make it on the soccer team, but he has been having a lot of difficulty at performing well in the tryouts. He becomes disappointed when he does not make it on the team, and starts losing hope in himself.

3. What can Amin do to increase his hope in Allah ﷻ?

4. What advice would you give to Amin about not losing hope?

Activity 1.1b: Review Questions (Continued)

REFLECT OVER YOUR OWN ACTIONS.

5. What are a few areas where you need to improve yourself in order to become a better servant of Allah ﷻ? Write these areas out for yourself (no need to share them with others).

6. As you begin your day tomorrow, actively try to be watchful over yourself to make sure you are meeting your goals.

7. At the end of the day, reflect on your actions and see how you did. Then answer the following question: How can the process of *murāqabah* (watchfulness) and *muḥāsabah* (reflection on and evaluation of our deeds) help us to become better human beings?

1.2 Happiness Through a Balanced Lifestyle

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Gain a deeper understanding about happiness.
- Identify the meaning of true happiness in the narrations *(ḥadīth)*.
- Recognize different strategies for being balanced.
- Develop personal strategies for living a balanced lifestyle.

SOURCES OF HAPPINESS

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

DIRECTIONS: Write down five or so activities or events that you do or engage in that make you happy. Try to think holistically—do not just limit yourself to things that people would typically mention.

Now look at your list. Are there any activities/events that start out with some unhappiness, but end up resulting in happiness? If not, brainstorm a few activities/events that have this quality, and add them to the list.

Now, for each of the activities and events that you have listed, rate the depth of the happiness you experience, with 1 being a low level of happiness, and 10 being a deep level of happiness.

DISCUSS: What do "low-level" happiness and "deep" happiness mean to you?

Islam is a path that teaches us how to be truly happy. The Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* use terms such as *surūr* and *faraḥ*, both of which mean "happiness." Some examples of this include:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ۝

"Say: 'In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy—let them be happy/rejoice (have faraḥ)! It is better than [all of the possessions] they gather."[1]

فَوَقَاهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَرَّ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا ۝

"So Allah will save them [the righteous] from the ills of that Day [of Resurrection], and grace them with freshness [on their faces] and happiness (surūr) [in their hearts]."[2]

Happiness is something that everyone desires. But how do we attain happiness? Is everything that seems to give us happiness actually a source of real happiness? Similarly, should we avoid everything that makes us unhappy? Lastly, what will give us lasting and deep happiness?

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 58.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Insān (76), Verse 11.

NOT ALL "HAPPINESS" IS HAPPINESS, NOR IS ALL "SADNESS" SADNESS

Some people look for happiness in things that are extremely harmful for them, and this will eventually result in pain and unhappiness. For example, someone who becomes addicted to drugs will experience a temporary sense of euphoria and happiness at first, but they will face a great deal of pain and misery when it wears off, or when they try to control or get rid of their addiction.

Others look for happiness in things that seem to give them happiness, but in reality, they can cause harm in the long run. These things may not seem to be as extreme as the previous example, but they can still lead to unhappiness due to their negative consequences. For example, regularly eating fried food or consuming too much sugar will have long-term health effects, many of which can cause more unhappiness than the temporary pleasure resulting from eating those things. Not getting regular exercise may allow someone to feel happy and relaxed, but in the long run they are harming themselves by being out of shape and not taking care of their health.

Similarly, sins can give a person temporary enjoyment, but in the long run have disastrous consequences. For example, we might be encouraged to feel that a *ḥarām* gathering is fun to attend because other people think it is, but in reality, because it is harmful for us, we will not feel good afterwards.

Some actions result in long-term physical unhappiness. One example of this is smoking or vaping, which are addictive and detrimental to a person's health. Other actions have infinite spiritual and physical unhappiness, such as many major sins. Take drinking alcohol as an example. It is obvious to us as Muslims how alcohol is detrimental to people physically and spiritually. It is only when people are socialized to think it is normal that they start to drink. They then continue to consume it, even if they feel terrible the next day and know the long-term consequences of it. Obviously, Shayṭān will not come to a practicing Muslim and encourage them to do such an obvious sin, but he will entice them with other sins, and all sins have a detrimental effect!

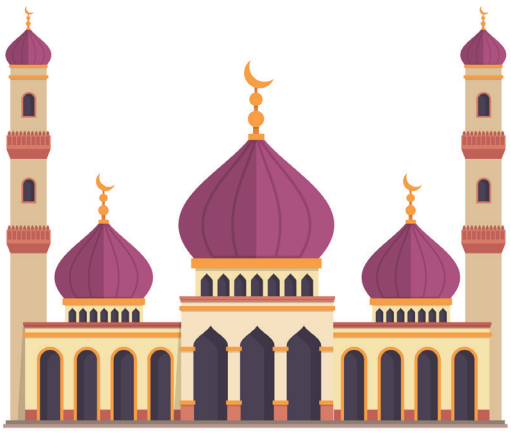
On the other hand, there are a number of things which at first may seem to be very painful, but they will actually lead to happiness later on.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why do people sometimes perform things that may cause pain and discomfort? For example, why do some people enjoy eating extremely spicy food? Or why do some individuals enjoy going on extremely turbulent roller coasters?

It is known that certain types of medical treatments or preventative measures (like injections) can cause temporary pain and discomfort, but in the long run these will lead to happiness in the form of good health.

In the spiritual world, acts of worship like the Fajr prayers and fasting can entail difficulties and sometimes significant struggles—but the benefits and blessings of these actions, and the sweetness of performing these acts of worship *(ʿibādah)* encourages Muslims to continue engaging in them, until we reach a point where, like the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, the happiest times of our days are when we are engaged in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ.



TEMPORARY HAPPINESS VS. DEEP HAPPINESS

How deep and lasting can happiness be? Some people think of happiness as being a short-term emotion that is limited to a temporary experience. This type of happiness is typically felt when we eat something very tasty, enjoy ourselves in a new and exciting way, and the like. There is nothing wrong with this type of happiness, as long as we achieve it in a correct and balanced manner; but we should realize that this level of happiness is limited and temporary. For example, eating your favorite dessert can make you quite happy, but only for a while, until you get full.

Life also has its ups and downs, and there are times where we will have to suffer through trials and disappointments that make it hard to enjoy even those things that we usually get happiness from.

On the other hand, the Qurʾān encourages us to look beyond this world, and its ever-changing nature and temporary pleasures, to find happiness in something that is much deeper. Allah ﷻ says:

"Allah expands the provision for whomever He wishes, and tightens it. And they boast about the life of this world, but compared to the Hereafter, the life of this world is but a [trifling] enjoyment." [3]

A person whose happiness is derived from faith in Allah ﷻ and righteous actions will truly rejoice and sense happiness, and will have fortune. [4]

True happiness plays an important role in life, and leads us to success—both in this world and the hereafter. Sometimes, the happiness of the soul can actually be derived from actions that some would think are mundane, repetitive, and not very new or exciting. Some examples of this are mentioned in the *ḥadīth* above—like obeying Allah ﷻ, fulfilling one's promise, observing the rights of others, and standing firm when faced with difficulties. Although these examples do not seem like they would bring "happiness" in the sense of being fun or exciting, they bring us closer to Allah ﷻ, give us fulfillment, and lead us toward achieving a deep state of happiness through obedience and strong faith.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verse 26.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 58.

Activity 1.2a: Ḥadīth Analysis

Read the following *ḥadīth*, and answer the questions below individually, then discuss them in pairs.

Imām ʿAli has said: *"Happiness of a believer is in obeying one's Lord, and one's sadness is in their sins."*[5]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq said: *"Happiness is in three things: Fulfilling one's promise; observing the rights of others; and standing firm when faced with difficulties."*[6]

Imām ʿAli said: *"Happiness expands the soul and stirs up energy."*[7]

1. Based on the three *ḥadīth* above, where does true happiness come from?

2. What are some actions that these *ḥadith* are telling us can lead to happiness? How do these actions bring us closer to Allah ?

3. What are some benefits of happiness that are mentioned above in the *ḥadīth*?

5 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Vol. 1, P. 400.
6 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl,* P. 323.
7 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Ḥadīth #2023.

ACHIEVING HAPPINESS THROUGH A BALANCED LIFESTYLE

In order to become closer to Allah ﷻ and attain true happiness, it is important for us to work on living a balanced life. As mentioned earlier, small, consistent actions will help us improve ourselves over time, inshāʾAllāh. We might notice this in other aspects of our lives as well, such as with exercising, a hobby, or an academic goal that we may have. For example, when people learn to lift weights, they have to start with a small weight and work their way up over time. They cannot start by lifting 200 pounds (90 kilos) right away.

Similarly, working on our goals gradually and consistently is the best way to improve ourselves. Islam is a holistic religion that asks us to take care of our entire being in order to serve Allah ﷻ in the best way possible. Therefore, it is important to take care of our body, our souls, and our minds to the best of our abilities for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

What if we are not always feeling our best? What if we feel down, sad, or anxious? It is natural to have ups and downs because of the nature of this world. We are often given tests in our lives that are meant to help us grow, which means we will always face new challenges in our lives. As explained above, it is not possible to always experience happiness in its temporary sense, and we should instead be looking for deeper happiness in our faith and connection to Allah ﷻ.

However, being sad or experiencing depression for an extended amount of time is not normal, nor something that we should expect to feel all of the time. Depression is a mental state where someone feels sad and miserable over a long period of time. Anxiety is a mental state where someone has a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness. Sometimes, the cause of such states is a problem that requires medical advice to deal with, and their root cause may be hormone imbalances, vitamin deficiencies, or other medical issues. In many cases however, poor mental and physical health can be improved with better lifestyle choices.

TIPS FOR LIVING A BALANCED LIFESTYLE

STOP AND REFLECT: How important is physical health in allowing someone to feel happy? Can you feel happier by only working on your physical health?

In order to improve ourselves over time, we should work on every aspect of our lives—whether it be physical, mental, or spiritual.

Here are some tips for what can be done to improve our happiness and well-being:

Regular exercise and diet	Daily exercise and a balanced diet are very important to keep healthy. It can also help a person feel positive and promote self-esteem.
Ḥalāl (permissible) entertainment	According to the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, spending a portion of our day enjoying ourselves in a *ḥalāl* manner without going to extremes can be a source of gaining energy that will help us in other aspects of our lives.
Sleep	Having a regular bedtime and getting an adequate amount of rest on a nightly basis is also important in maintaining good psychological health. Sleep that occurs during the actual night hours when it is dark outside is much healthier (usually this is the sleep that one attains before midnight). It has benefits for our psychological well-being, sleep efficiency, and even our immune system. Therefore we should avoid going to sleep late, then waking up late into the day.
Company	We should surround ourselves with people who will help us improve ourselves, and provide a positive environment that protects us from harmful things.
Avoiding sins and performing our obligations	Having a real commitment to practice the laws of Islam will cause our faith *(īmān)* to flourish, and will result in what Allah ﷻ refers to in the Qurʾān refers to as a pure life: *"Whoever acts righteously, whether male or female, while they are a believer, We will surely cause them to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward (according) to the best of what they used to do."*[8] On the other hand, turning away from Allah ﷻ can result in a dismal quality of life, as Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"And whoever disregards (turns away from) My remembrance, indeed they will have a wretched life, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall raise them blind."*[9]
Deep belief in Allah ﷻ	Reassuring ourselves that Allah ﷻ is in charge of all of our affairs; being aware that He has all of the Attributes of perfection and beauty; and remembering Him constantly, while performing the duties mentioned above will lead to spiritual healing and happiness.

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Naḥl (16), Verse 97.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verse 124.

Activity 1.2b: My Strategies for Being Balanced

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions below for implementing strategies for living a balanced lifestyle.

1. What kinds of healthy foods do you like to eat that you could try having more often?

2. What kinds of unhealthy foods should you try to eat less of?

3. What kind of exercise would you like to try doing more regularly?

4. Is there anything you feel you could get to try to help improve your hygiene (ex: trying a different type of toothpaste, or getting an electric toothbrush)?

5. Are your friends generally optimistic and positive, or pessimistic and negative? How does their attitude affect yours?

6. What are some strategies you may want to implement for sleeping better?

1.3 Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the difference between self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Examine the importance of removing arrogance from our manners and etiquettes *(akhlāq)*.
- Outline the meaning of true happiness and real perspectives.
- Understand how being human is what we have been entrusted with by Allah ﷻ, and what we do with this trust can impact our sense of self and happiness.

SELF-CONFIDENCE:
to have a feeling or belief in being able to accomplish certain tasks and goals

SELF-ESTEEM:
the overall sense we have of how much worth and value we have

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think is the difference between self-confidence and self-esteem?

Self-confidence means to have a feeling or belief in being able to accomplish certain tasks and goals. For example, a math teacher may be confident in their ability to do multiplication.

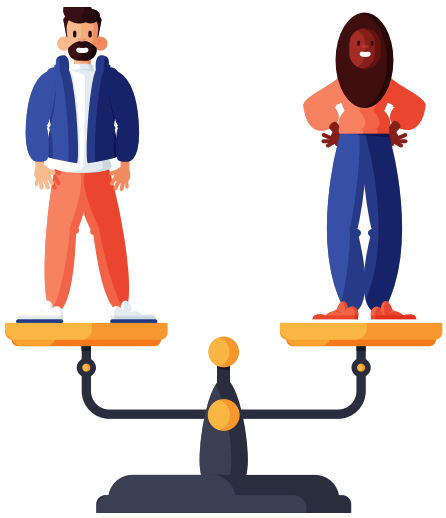
Self-esteem is our overall sense of how much worth and value we have. Islam teaches us that self-esteem is extremely important—as long as it stems from a correct and balanced perspective. Allah ﷻ has created us as His representatives *(khalīfah)* on Earth, and we have the potential to be the most God-like of any of His creatures.

We must honor this blessing and responsibility by acknowledging it, then striving to be the best of creations. As Muslims, we can have strong self-esteem if we recognize that human beings are important creations of Allah ﷻ who can reach perfection through performing good deeds. We should feel honored when we think about how much love Allah ﷻ has shown us through all of the blessings that He has showered upon us.

As we go through our lives, it is important for us to have a real perspective. Having a real perspective means to see things the way they truly are. It has been reported that the Prophet ﷺ used to often supplicate: *"O my Lord! Allow me to see things how they truly are."*[1]

All human beings have two perspectives: the view of ourselves, meaning the way we see ourselves; and the view of others, meaning the way we see others.

People with low self-esteem tend to believe that they are not valuable, but others are. Conversely, there are people who have positive views about themselves, but not about others. There should be a balance between these two perspectives—we need to be able to see the value not only in ourselves, but also in others.



1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 17, P. 273.

In reality, everything that we have or that we are is all from, and by, Allah ﷻ. He says in the Qurʾān: *"O people, you are those in need of Allah, while Allah is Free of all needs, the Praiseworthy."*[2] He repeatedly reminds us that everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him: *"To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and whatever is within them. And He has Power over all things."*[3] We are all part of Allah's possessions as well. Since true ownership is with Him, it means that no one has the right to feel arrogant over other people because of what Allah ﷻ has entrusted to them. By the same token, we do not have a right to question what Allah ﷻ has given us, or doubt that He is capable of giving us more.

A TRADITION OF THE PROPHET ﷺ TO ABŪ DHARR

The Prophet ﷺ said to his famous companion: "O Abū Dharr, whoever dies having an atom's weight of arrogance in one's heart will never even smell the scent of Heaven—unless they repent beforehand."[4]

In another tradition, Abū Dharr, may Allah ﷻ be pleased with him, asked the Prophet ﷺ if it was a problem for him to like having beautiful things, to which the Prophet ﷺ responded by asking Abū Dharr if he was remembering Allah ﷻ through them?

Abū Dharr asked: "O Messenger of Allah, I am fond of beauty so much that I wish even the handle on my cane, and the lace of my sandal was beautiful. Should I be afraid of this?"

The Prophet ﷺ questioned: "How do you find your heart?"

Abū Dharr said: "I find it knowing the truth (or reality), and am certain of it."

The Prophet ﷺ replied: "Then that is not arrogance; rather, arrogance is that you leave the truth and exceed it. You look at people and you do not see their honor as being like your honor, or their blood like yours."[5]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

In the tradition above, what do you think it means to "leave the truth and exceed it"?

a. How can exaggeration lead to overconfidence?

b. How can it lead to low self-esteem?

When we look at this tradition of the Prophet ﷺ, we see that knowing "the truth" or reality is not considered arrogance. If we have a true sense of ourselves and focus on having a real perspective, then we will be able to improve ourselves over time, inshāʾAllāh.

FINDING HAPPINESS IN DIFFICULTIES

Ponder upon these verses of the Qurʾān:

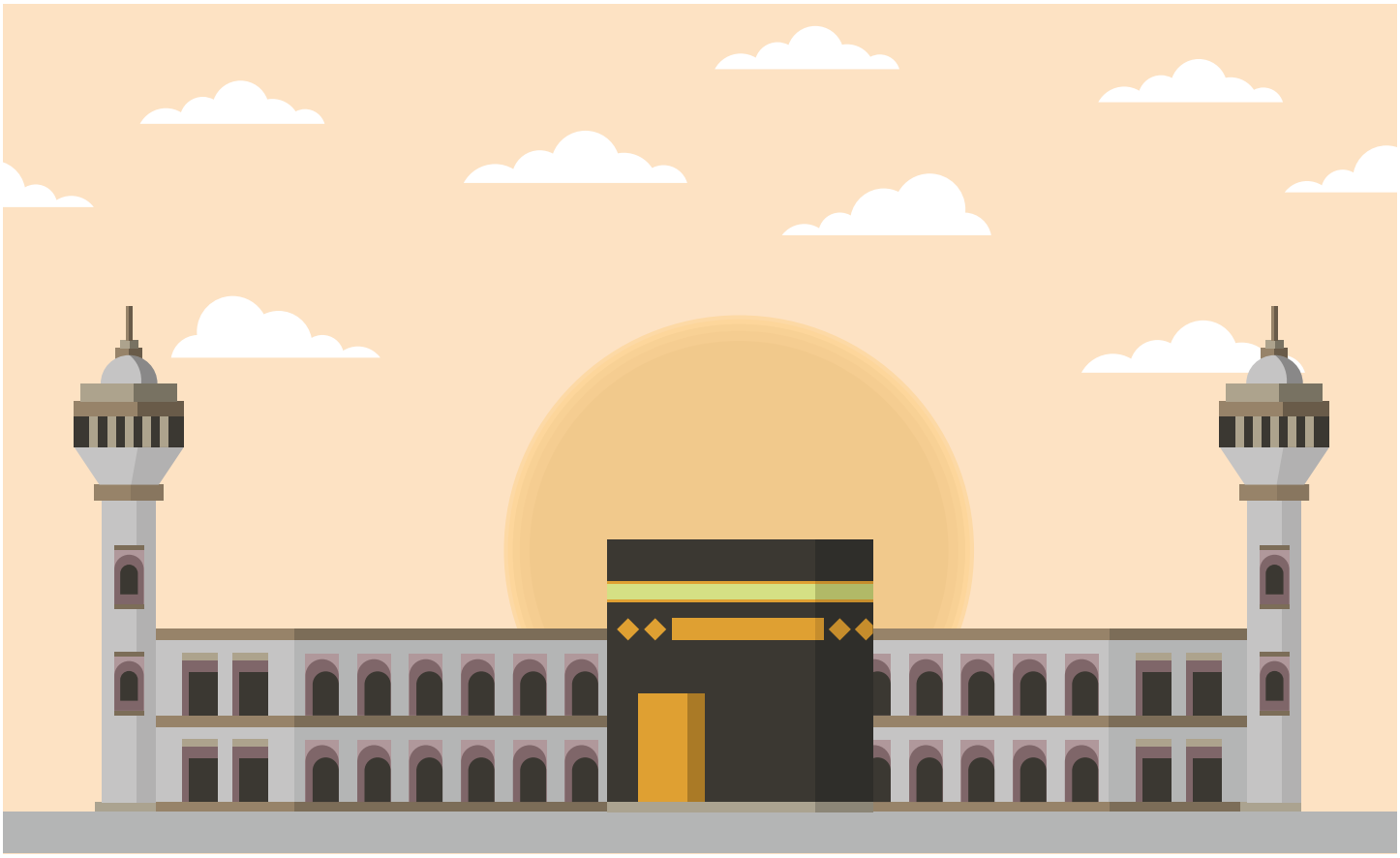
"No affliction visits the land or yourselves, but it is in a Book before We bring it about—indeed that is easy for Allah; so that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor boast for what comes your way, and Allah does not like any self-deluded and boastful (person)."[6]

STOP AND REFLECT: When you look at the above verses, Allah ﷻ is explaining that afflictions or hardships are meant to teach us humility. In what ways can being faced with trials and afflictions teach a person humility? How can "what comes [our] way" lead to bragging?

According to these verses, happiness is not supposed to be dependent on having a smooth and easy life, or having good things come our way. Rather, the verses state that sometimes people go through difficult times in order to make them stop pinning their emotions on such feeble and transient measures.

A Qurʾānic example of finding happiness in something is the building of the Kaʿbah. The Kaʿbah is one of the most simple structures ever built, yet one of the most significant and history-changing structures as well. Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ, and his son Prophet Ismāʾīl ﷺ, derived a type of spiritual happiness from building the Kaʾbah:

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Fāṭir (35), Verse 15.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 120.
4 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 74, P. 73.
5 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 74, P. 73.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57), Verses 22-23.



> *Abraham climbed the mountain and retrieved the Black Stone which had been stashed away in one of its caves. They [Abraham and Ishmael] placed the Black Stone in the eastern corner of the building so that it could be seen and touched from the outside. Then they continued to build row after row. God sent a cool breeze from paradise called Sakinah upon them to give them strength and comfort through their toil. They made two doors, one facing northeast from which to enter, and the other facing southwest from which to exit… Abraham and Ishmael found the work exhilarating, and they said as they toiled: 'Lord, accept this from us, for You alone are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Lord, make us subservient to You, and of our progeny, make a nation subservient to You, show us our rites of worship, and accept our penance, for You alone are the Clement, the Ever-Merciful. Lord, raise in their midst a Messenger from among them who will recite Your verses to them, and teach them the law and wisdom and purify them, for You are the Invincible, the Wise.'*[7]

From a secular perspective, someone who does not understand Islam could have mocked them for taking happiness in building such a simple building in the middle of the desert. But they were just doing their responsibility—and Allah ﷻ showed us how over the centuries, the world came to recognize the value of their deeds.

Another historical example is that of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ who was martyred on the plains of Karbalāʾ—after which the entire population of the Shīʿah was soon reduced to only a few people, other than Imām as-Sajjād ؑ and his close family members. Yet that event became so significant that now—millions of people gather in Karbalāʾ on the day of Arbaʿīn on an annual basis. We are hopeful that this gathering will be one of the causes of the reappearance of the Imām of our Time عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

7 Arastu, Rizwan, *God's Emissaries,* P. 217.

IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN BEINGS

Rather than looking at what we have and what we do not have, we should take a deeper perspective to try to derive happiness and self-esteem. We cannot measure ourselves based on superficial standards of beauty, possessions, athletic ability, or popularity.

When we look at ourselves as creations of Allah ﷻ and followers of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, we should have self-confidence and a strong sense of self when it comes to Islam, and in knowing that we are on the path of Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: What characteristics should make us confident in ourselves? What determines a person's worth?

As human beings, we should realize that we are extraordinary. According to the Qurʾān, the entirety of creation is at the disposal of humankind. For example, Allah ﷻ says: "Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is on the earth, and the ships which run through the sea by His command?" [8]

Human beings have been created to be representatives of Allah ﷻ on this Earth. Every human being has incredible potential. That is why Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: "Human beings are mines, like mines of gold and silver." [9] Therefore we are all the most precious creations of the Almighty!

Having this correct perspective helps us to see through false notions of worth—such as possessions, temporary beauty, worldly popularity, and misinterpreting events that transpire in one's life—to what really makes someone worthy, which is being a true human being, and using one's free will to turn to Allah ﷻ.

Therefore, we need to consider what we have been entrusted with from Allah ﷻ, and what we can do with that trust to make ourselves better.

The gist of many traditions reported from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ is that happiness can be found in connecting to Allah ﷻ through worship and obedience. For example, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ says: "The happiness of a believer is in obedience to Allah, and the grief of a believer is in disobeying Him." [10]

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "A person who becomes happy as a result of one's good deeds, and sad as a result of one's bad deeds is a believer." [11]

On a daily basis, how much do you let yourself feel happy about the things that you do to serve Allah ﷻ?

People in the modern world often starve for happiness, but unfortunately some search for it in the wrong ways or places.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can religious practices which allow us to connect to Allah ﷻ be a means of deep happiness?

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥajj (22), Verse 65.
9 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 8, P. 177.
10 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* P. 400, Ḥadīth #45.
11 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 64, P. 350.

Activity 1.3a:
Practical Exercises for Identifying our Traits

DIRECTIONS: Fill out the reflection questions below. (You will not be required to share your answers.)

1. What are some of the obligations that you have performed today for Allah ﷻ?

2. When have you stopped yourself from disobeying Him?

3. What was your intention in doing these things?

4. How much value do you put on what you have done?

Activity 1.3b:
My Strategies for Maintaining a Real Perspective

DIRECTIONS: Fill out the reflection questions below. (You will not be required to share your answers.)

1. What are some of the strategies which have been mentioned in this lesson that you can use in your own life for gaining and maintaining a real perspective of yourself?

2. What situations cause you to have low self-esteem? What do you sometimes feel low self-esteem about?

   a. Which of these situations might be caused by scheduling problems, or other things that can be fixed—like not getting enough sleep, or not eating properly—and feeling down as a result of these?

   b. What should you be grateful for in the moments that you have low self-esteem in these situations?

   c. Which of these situations can you improve by asking for forgiveness, and trying to fix your mistakes?

Activity 1.3b: My Strategies for Maintaining a Real Perspective (Continued)

3. What are some situations where you might feel low self-confidence?

a. What should you be grateful for in the moments you have low self-confidence in these situations?

b. Which of these situations can you improve by asking for forgiveness, and trying to fix your mistakes?

CHAPTER 2

Spiritual Diseases

2.1 Suspicion vs. Thinking Positively

2.2 Backbiting and Slander

2.1 Suspicion vs. Thinking Positively

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the elements of suspiciousness in Islam.
- Refer to verses of the Noble Qurʾān to understand negative assumptions.
- Learn the benefits of avoiding suspicion.
- Learn and demonstrate practical tips about how to deal with suspicion from an Islamic point of view.

Islam encourages us to always assume the best about one another

Suspiciousness—or having a tendency to be suspicious of others—is a mental process where someone has an inclination to distrust and doubt things, especially the actions or intentions of other people. Such a person tends to make negative or evil assumptions about people or situations.

This kind of suspicion, when applied to other people, is harmful; and in Islam, it is considered a moral failure because it can destroy our relationships with other believers. In previous lessons, we have seen that in the perspective of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, the sanctity of believers is greater than the sanctity of the Kaʿbah.[1] We should therefore avoid suspicion because it can cause undeserving resentment, and lead to breaking up relationships. We also want to give people the same benefit of the doubt that we would want from others, and be merciful and forgiving to them—the way we hope Allah ﷻ will be with us.

SUSPICION IN ISLAM

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثيراً مِنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ...

"O you who believe, avoid most (negative) assumptions [about others]; indeed some assumptions are [a form of suspicion and] sinful…"[2]

Islam encourages us to always assume the best about one another in our day-to-day lives. Even when we hear gossip about someone, or see them doing something unexpected, we are encouraged to interpret it in the best way possible, and avoid giving it a negative interpretation.

Unfortunately, sometimes we may think negatively or interpret things in a bad way, and this can lead to suspicion, which can then lead to a breakdown of even the closest of relationships. It can also become extreme, leading a person to be paranoid and always think someone is trying to hurt them or plot against them.

The Noble Qurʾān commands us to avoid suspicion so that we can overcome this problem. Whenever we are tempted to interpret something negatively without any basis for doing so, we should stop ourselves, and try our best to interpret it positively instead.

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 64, P. 71.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 12.

Regarding the above verse from Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt:

- Notice that the Qurʾān does not only say this is impermissible, rather it says to 'avoid' this, and not even go near it. This is a very strong prohibition!
- The verse says to avoid *most* assumptions. Most of our thoughts tend to lean toward a negative assumption, as opposed to a positive assumption.

Whenever negative assumptions come to our mind, we should ask for forgiveness from Allah ﷻ, and try to get them out of our mind. Another way of helping to remove suspicious thoughts is to avoid associating with evil people.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said:
"Association with evil people will lead to suspicion about good people."[3]

EXAMPLES OF SUSPICIOUSNESS

Suspicion is especially harmful within families. A lot of conflicts within the family are due to suspicion. Sometimes, children may interpret their parents' denial of their requests as something personal, not realizing that their parents are just trying to do their job. Parents can also at times become overly suspicious of their children. In such cases, it is important for children to conduct themselves in a way that would not make their parents worried, and politely state the truth if they are suspected of something they did or did not do.

Sometimes, people from outside of the family might be the cause of negative suspicion. For example, someone might tell us to be wary of our parents' intentions when they tell us to do something, however their 'advice' may be misleading, and it is actually our parents who are looking out for us sincerely. We have to be very cautious about what advice we take from other people in regards to our relationships, and avoid being suspicious of the people who are closest to us.

3 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 74, P. 384.

Activity 2.1a: Rethinking our Thoughts

DIRECTIONS: Read the following examples where it would be easy to misinterpret someone's actions on the basis of suspicion, then explain how you should think more positively:

1. Your friend declines your invitation to play a sport for a valid reason; but you think that they do not want to spend time with you, and this causes a deterioration in your relationship.

2. You are working with someone on a project. You offer an idea, but they do not take it up because of a valid reason. You think that they have something against you personally, and this causes the project to fail.

3. You cannot find your cell phone. Instead of looking for it properly, you assume that someone in your house must have taken it. You get mad at your sibling before even asking for help to look for it, which makes them feel that you do not trust them.

4. You hear that a friend said something bad about you. You assume the worst about them even though you yourself did not hear what they said about you.

5. A believing brother or sister is seen with a person of the opposite gender in public. The first thought that comes to mind is that there is something suspicious taking place between them. However, you redirect your thoughts to think that perhaps the two of them might be brother and sister, or they have some other legitimate reason to be talking to one another.

THE BENEFITS OF AVOIDING SUSPICION

Imām ʿAlī (a) said that avoiding suspicion benefits us more than anyone else because it leads to calmness and tranquility of the heart.

He said: "Interpreting things positively (having *ḥusn adh-dhann*) leads to peace of mind." [4]

REMOVING SUSPICIONS FROM OURSELVES

We have been encouraged not to be suspicious of other people; at the same time—to a reasonable extent and whenever possible—we need to ensure that our actions are proper so that we do not allow or give others an opportunity to be suspicious of us.

It has been narrated that once the Prophet (s) was speaking to one of his wives in the masjid when two men walked by. The Prophet (s) told them: "This is Ṣafiyyah, daughter of Ḥayy." The two men responded: "Glory be to Allah [we would never think bad about you]." However, the Prophet (s) wanted to make sure that they did not think he was talking in a friendly way to a strange woman, so he explained himself, even though he was the Prophet (s). He (ṣ) continued: "Shaytān to one's body is like the movement of blood within the veins [in other words, he runs in a human['s thoughts], the way blood flows through one's veins]. I was afraid that something not good may have reached your hearts and given you the wrong impression."[5]

ARE ALL SUSPICIONS BAD?

A person needs to use one's intelligence to decide when suspecting others is bad, and when it is necessary. If the person we are having suspicions toward has not been raised and educated in an environment with good morals, then there is no need to assume that everything they do is good and trustworthy. As well, we should not be naive, nor allow ourselves to trust people who show enmity or hostility toward us because of our religion or ethnicity. We must be able to distinguish between enemies and friends, and exercise caution accordingly.

The important thing to remember is that we should avoid unnecessarily suspecting our family, friends, and other believers. We should also be cautious of people who try to take us away from Islam. For example, if someone is always telling us that our parents or trusted friends are not good or that they want what is bad for us, or that Allah (swt) does not care about us, then we should avoid these types of people.

MAKING EXCUSES FOR OTHERS

Even if we see someone in a situation that looks suspicious, we must try to make as many excuses for them as possible, and try to find as many justifications as we can. There are various narrations from the Ahlul Bayt (a) which tell us about this, for example:

"Interpret the action of your brothers (or sisters) in the best way possible until it becomes very clear that they are doing the wrong thing, and do not interpret a word that comes from them negatively." [6]

If we really cannot find any justification, then we should ask them to clarify what they were doing, or what they meant by their words or actions.

4 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Vol. 1, P. 344.
5 Hanbal, Aḥmad ibn, *Musnad Aḥmad*, Vol.44, P. 433. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
6 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Vol. 4, P. 1784.

PRACTICAL TIPS TO AVOID NEGATIVE SUSPICION

1. Be Vigilant	When experiencing unjustified and negative suspicion, actively remember that it is Shayṭān who is contributing to these thoughts, and that we need to overcome him by dispelling them.
2. Communicate	If we are close to someone and it will not offend them, then try talking to them. For example, if your friend does not show up for an event that you planned to do together, call or message them to see what happened, and remind them that you care about them.
3. Make Excuses for Other People	Make as many excuses as possible to justify the actions of other people. This will help keep the relationship strong, and it will also give us peace of mind.
4. Pray for Others	Sometimes, we do not have the opportunity to talk to someone about how we were upset by something they did; or even after talking to them, they still do not understand our intentions. We should pray for such people so that our hearts can be softened toward one another.
5. Avoid Gossip	Sometimes, when we are suspicious of other people, we start to gossip about them. Remember to communicate, make excuses for others, and pray for them instead of gossiping.
6. Remember the Good	Try to remember the good someone did for you. For example, if you are suspicious of your parents, try to remember all of the good that they have done for you which shows how they truly care about you.
7. We do not Know our Deeds	Consider those who are around you to be better than you. Even if they may be less committed to practicing the religion, perhaps in Allah's view they have more worth, and in the future they will become His special servants. This will make it easier to justify their actions which may seem suspicious or negative in your view.

Activity 2.1b: Identifying Attitudes

Fill out the chart below with a positive and negative attitude that you could have for each situation.

SITUATION	NEGATIVE Response/Attitude	POSITIVE Response/Attitude
Your friend forgets to wish you a happy birthday on your birthday.	I think my friend does not like me anymore.	
A couple of your friends are whispering together when you walk in the room. They stop whispering and look a bit embarrassed once they see you.		
In the school assembly, they forget to mention your name when reading out the list of prize winners.		

MY STRATEGIES FOR SUSPICION

1. What, or who, do you usually become suspicious about that you want to work on? (you will not be sharing this)

2. What strategies do you plan to use in each of the situations you listed above to keep from being suspicious of others?

2.2 Backbiting and Slander

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define backbiting and slander.
- Identify the effects of backbiting.
- Explain the exceptions to backbiting.
- Recognize strategies for not backbiting.
- Determine what to do in various scenarios involving backbiting.
- Develop personal strategies to avoid backbiting.

GHĪBAH:
Backbiting—to reveal something negative and true

TUHMAH:
Slander—to accuse someone of something which is untrue

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

...وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

"...(And do not let some of you) backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is at-Tawwāb (One who accepts repentance much), All-Merciful."[1]

In the previous lessons, we learned about being careful of what we say, and understanding the evils we can cause by misusing our tongue in the sense of speech, i.e. if we say wrong or bad things.

This lesson will explore two particular evils that are caused only by the use of the tongue; and unfortunately, are a very common problem. These are the evils of:

- Backbiting *(ghībah)*
- Slander *(tuhmah)*

UNDERSTANDING BACKBITING AND SLANDER

Allah ﷻ likes His creations to be a mirror of His Beauty and Perfection. He is *As-Sattār*—which means 'The One who covers the faults and sins of others.' To reveal something that is negative, but true about a believer behind their back is called *ghībah*—backbiting. However, to accuse a person of something that is not true is called *tuhmah*—slander. The negative connotation of your speech depends on the common view around you, and what would be considered as being negative.

Abū Dharr, a very close companion of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, once asked the Prophet ﷺ: "O Messenger of Allah, what is *ghībah* (backbiting)?"

The Prophet ﷺ replied: "It is to mention about your brother (or sister) that which they detest."

Abū Dharr asked: "O Messenger of Allah, what if that which is mentioned about the person is true?"

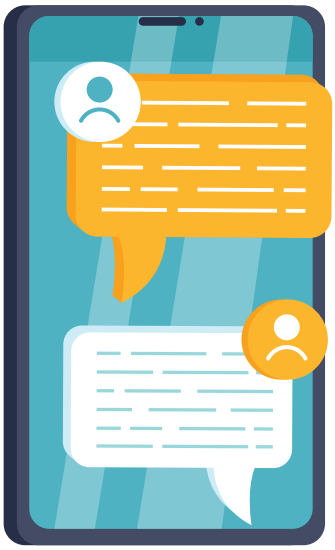
To this, the Prophet ﷺ answered: "Know that when you mention something that is in them, you have committed backbiting *(ghībah)*; and when you mention something that is not in them, then you have slandered them *(tuhmah)*."[2]

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 12.
2 Muttaqī Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl,* Vol.3, P. 584.

There are different ways of committing these grave sins; for example, speaking negatively about someone in one of the following manners:

1. In person: i.e. face-to-face to another person, or in a gathering.
2. Over the phone when speaking to a friend, or a family member.
3. Through social media—to insult or publicize another person's sins or mistakes—whether they are true or not.

Listening to someone else backbiting without doing anything to stop it or discourage it is also not permissible.



The Noble Prophet ﷺ said: "A person who listens to backbiting (ghībah) is like the one who backbites (does the ghībah)." [3]

People backbite for many reasons, some of which including the following:

1. To damage other people's reputations, and make themselves look better.
2. To gain revenge against a person whom they have a grudge or grievance against.
3. Shayṭān's influence: he makes it appealing to talk about other people as a way of having something to talk about.

BACKBITING AND SLANDER ARE FORBIDDEN

Backbiting and slander are major sins and are very much detested in Islam. We should avoid these sins at all times. The Noble Qurʾān describes the reality of backbiting as eating the flesh of a dead corpse.

The Qurʾān describes backbiting as eating the flesh of a dead corpse

These two vices spoil people's images and personalities. Revealing negative information about someone causes others to think badly of them. When people are not there to defend themselves, they should not be spoken about. If you hear negative things about believers, you should think the best of them, and not allow the negative information to influence your opinion about them.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: "Woe to every scandal-monger and slanderer." [4]

3 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Ḥadīth #1171.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Humazah (104), Verse 1.

WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED?

Negativity in the definition of backbiting depends on the *ʿurf*—which means the common view amongst people. Anything that would generally be considered rude, bad, or harmful to the reputation of a person in the culture you live among is regarded as negative. The *ʿurf* is very important: in one culture it might be considered praise to call someone 'healthy,' while in other cultures it may be considered insulting as it could mean being overweight. In one culture being fair-skinned might be considered positive, while calling someone dark-skinned is negative; but in another place it might be the opposite. On the other hand, just because the *ʿurf* deems something okay, or positive, it does not mean that every person will deem that thing in the same way. As a result, the criterion for backbiting is based on both *ʿurf* and the person.

There is no condition on whether a person would be okay with you saying that thing in front of them or not. It is still forbidden to talk about them in a negative way—even if they are okay with it. It is also not permissible to talk about an individual in a way that implies something negative. For example, if you talk about the way that a person was dressed when you saw them the day before and it was just you and them, and it has a negative implication, then you should not say this.

It is best to talk about things that do not involve speaking of other people whenever possible, because otherwise we may start talking about others and not even realize that we are speaking negatively in regards to them—if we are not completely cautious.

THE EFFECTS OF BACKBITING

Backbiting leads to division and mistrust among communities. It also leads to animosity, hatred, and great conflict between people, and can even lead to breaking up of friendships, partnerships, and families.

STOP AND REFLECT: Person A starts talking negatively about Person B to Person C. Person C listens to them, but the next time Person A and Person C meet, Person A notices that person C is reluctant to get close to them. Why do you think that is the case? Do you think that Person A will be able to regain the trust of Person C after they heard negative things said to them about Person B?

There are some exceptions to backbiting *(ghībah)*, such as:

1. When a person is subject to injustice *(ẓulm)*, then it is allowed for them to air their grievances as a way of seeking help for the injustice that was done.
2. One of the exceptions when it is permissible to talk about someone's sins is if one sins openly. However, this is only permissible for those sins that they commit in public. For example, if a Muslim is part of a *ḥarām* music band and this is a known fact, then talking about this particular sin of theirs is not forbidden. However, we must still be very careful about revealing other sins or defects of people in general, and think about what the purpose and intention of our speech is. Defaming someone's personality, belittling them, or making fun of them is not permissible.

- ▹ Oftentimes, we may be quick to speak about someone, not knowing if they repented for their sin as we are speaking about it. For example, if you talk about something that a person posted on social media a while ago, they may have already taken it down or regretted it by the time you talk about it. We should try our best to cover up the faults of others, the way we want Allah ﷻ to conceal our bad actions.
- ▹ Sometimes, we might backbite other people because we are upset with them, so instead of confronting them directly, we talk about them behind their backs. But we should try to communicate directly with them instead of talking about them to others.

3. If we are worried about a sin which we saw someone commit that others do not know about, it will not help to share this sin with others unless seeking advice from someone is the only way that you can help that person overcome the sin. However, in such a case, we should be careful when deciding: **a)** whether we really need to talk to someone; and **b)** who we should talk to for advice. We should make sure that the person we are talking to is trustworthy, their advice will help us resolve the issue, and that there is no way to talk about the issue without using the person's name.

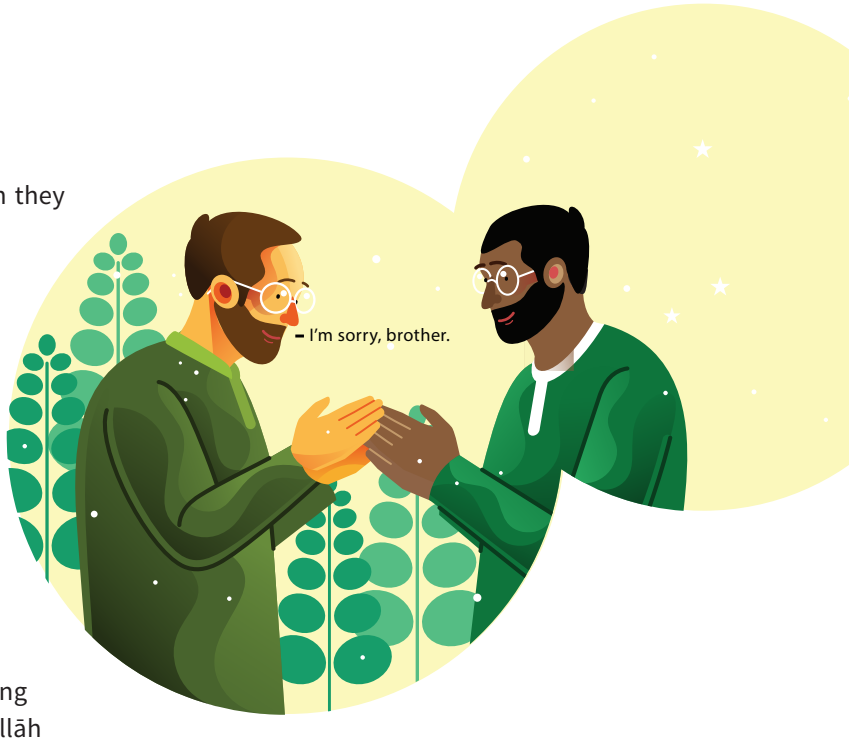
REPENTING FROM BACKBITING

If a person wants to repent from this sin of backbiting, then they have to take three steps:

1. Regret the act of backbiting.

2. Seek forgiveness from Allah ﷻ.

3. Ask the person (if they are alive) whom they backbited for forgiveness.



This is obligatory *(wājib)* according to the ruling of Āyatullāh Khamenei; and recommended *(mustaḥab)* according to the ruling of Āyatullāh Sīstānī. However, if the backbiting was done in a way that it ruined a person's reputation, or it was insulting, and seeking forgiveness would be a way of compensating for the wrong that was done, then it has to be done according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī's ruling as well.

We also need to consider two other points here. If telling the victim of the backbiting about what happened would cause them significant harm, or if it may make the matter even worse, then it may be better not to tell them, or to seek expert advice on this. We also need to go to the people who heard the backbiting and explain that what we said was not appropriate, and try to repair any damage to the victim's reputation that may have been caused by our backbiting.

HOW TO AVOID BACKBITING

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some topics that you can converse with your friends rather than talk about other people and their faults?

In order to avoid backbiting, we should try our best to have something useful and positive to talk about when we attend gatherings. Contemplating the negative results and effects of backbiting—such as losing one's status amongst people, or the movement of the bad deeds of the one who was backbited about to the one who backbites—can also mentally help a person avoid backbiting. Otherwise, the conversation may unfortunately turn toward making fun of those who are present, and/or criticizing people who are absent.

Not only are we ourselves not allowed to backbite, we are also not allowed to listen to backbiting. If someone is backbiting, we should respectfully take the following steps to stop them:

1. **Tell them that we do not want to talk about anyone else**

   If you are going to be spending time with someone, you should just tell them: "I really do not like talking about other people."

2. **Redirect the conversation**

   We do not always have to offer a response to what a person says, instead, we can just ask an unrelated question, or talk about something else that you have in common with them.

3. **Leave that gathering or conversation**

   Unless we truly cannot leave (example, if we are together in a car or a bus), we should try our best to leave when people are backbiting and we cannot stop them.

4. **Defend the person who is being criticized**

   If someone is talking negatively about another person, we can say things like: "O they helped me so much last time I asked them," or "Maybe they were having a bad day when that happened as usually they are very kind."

Activity 2.2a: Scenarios

Read the scenarios below, and try to offer solutions for what is happening with a partner or group. Afterwards, share your ideas.

BONUS ACTIVITY: Create a skit using one of the scenarios below. Then, answer the questions with your group.

1. Sarah is at a birthday party. After eating the cake, all of the girls start talking about Fatima, Sarah's friend, who left the party early. The girls are saying how Fatima always leaves early and is a bit stuck up because she does not like to stay and spend time with everyone. One girl says Fatima told her she does not really like parties, but she cannot understand how that is possible.

   a. What should Sarah do in this situation? What should she say?

   b. If after trying to stop her friends, it does not work, then what should Sarah do?

2. Hasan is getting lunch with his friends. They start talking about one of their other friends Kumayl, and how Kumayl watches Rated-R movies that his parents do not approve of, but he watches them without telling his parents. They start talking about other things which Kumayl does, like how he listens to forbidden music.

   a. What should Hasan say to his friends?

   b. If after trying to stop his friends, they do not listen, then what should Hasan do?

3. Zaynab has been really upset that one of her friends, Khadijah, did not help her enough in a group project. When she sees her other friend, Kawthar, she starts talking about it right away to her. Kawthar then also starts complaining about Khadijah.

   a. What should Zaynab do instead of talking about her problems to Kawthar?

Activity 2.2b: My Strategies for Backbiting

1. In what situations do you find yourself surrounded by backbiting the most?

2. What strategies do you plan to use in each of the situations you listed above to stop yourself from backbiting?

3. For the next week, write down when you or someone around you speaks badly about others. Then, note what strategies you tried to keep yourself away from backbiting.

	SITUATION	STRATEGIES
SUN		
MON		
TUE		
WED		
THU		
FRI		
SAT		

4. **End of the Week Reflection:** Did your strategies help? How can you improve on them in the future?

CHAPTER 3

Family and Friendships

3.1 Being Good to One's Parents

3.2 Friendship

3.1 Being Good to One's Parents

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Outline why obedience to our parents is an obligation.
- Analyze what to do in difficult situations involving parents.
- Understand how parents represent Allah ﷻ in our lives.
- Outline how growing up entails a different relationship and responsibilities toward our parents.

RESPECT, LOVE, AND CARE FOR OUR PARENTS

Being respectful with, and doing good toward our parents is an obligation *(farḍ)* for everyone—whether our parents are righteous or not, and whether they are Muslim or not.

Allah ﷻ says in Qurʾān:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ...

"Worship Allah and do not ascribe any partners to Him, and be good to parents…"[1]

This verse, among many others that mention parents immediately after the worship of Allah ﷻ, shows how important parents are in Islam. Numerous traditions also show us that it is obligatory *(wājib)* to treat our parents well, and it is forbidden *(ḥarām)* to disrespect them or abandon them.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said:
"The biggest and most important divine duty is to do good toward one's parents."[2]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ(4), Verse 36.
2 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Vol. 10, P. 709.

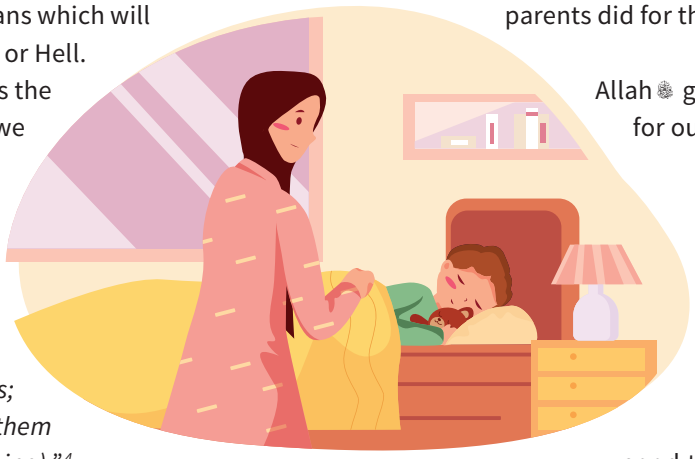
THINK, PAIR, SHARE

In this verse, as in some other verses, Allah ﷻ commands children toward *iḥsān*—being good toward one's parents—without going into details about what constitutes *iḥsān*. Independently, then in pairs, come up with a list of actions that would be examples of *iḥsān*. Be prepared to share these with the class.

Displeasing one's parents is a barrier to being allowed entry into Heaven. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, on the rights of parents upon children, said: *"Be good toward your parents so that your reward will be Heaven, but if you become disowned (ʿāqq) by them, then your place will be the Fire (of Hell)."*[3]

This *ḥadīth* indicates that your parents, and the way you treat them, will become the means which will lead you to enter either Heaven or Hell. Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ narrates the following in regards to how we must treat our parents:

"Your eyes should only look at your parents with kindness and caring. Do not raise your voice over their voice; do not raise your hands over their hands; and do not walk in front of them (do not proceed them when walking)."[4]



WHY DOES ISLAM PLACE SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON ONE'S PARENTS?

Let us look at what parents do for their children. Typically, parents fall in love with their children well before they are even born. They busy themselves shopping for their unborn child, deciding on what to name them, and planning all of the wonderful things they would like to do for them when they come into this world.

When a baby is born, the parents stay up at night, and work hard during the day just for the child's comfort and happiness. They try to give them the best education possible, and constantly worry about them and look out for them, trying to stop anyone or anything from harming them.

Parents are overjoyed when they see their children happy or enjoying themselves, even if it is just eating or sleeping, even if the child never thanks them or appreciates them. Throughout the entire lives of their children, parents sacrifice much of their own comfort, freedom, wealth, and time to ensure their children's well-being.

The extent of which parents give from themselves is not easy for a child to truly comprehend because a lot of it happens when the child is too young to fully understand, or in a way that is not spoken about or observed by the children.

STOP AND REFLECT: Can you think of some of the ways in which your parents went through hardships or difficulties to raise you?

Usually, when people grow up and have children of their own, then they start to understand more about what their parents did for them.

Allah ﷻ gives us a perfect prayer to recite for our parents in the Noble Qurʾān:

رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا ۝

"My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they nurtured me when I was [a] small [child]!"[5]

This verse gives the reason why children should pray for, and be good toward their parents. It is because they "nurtured and brought them up." They raised them, took care of them, and provided for their material needs. More importantly, they guided them toward a path of knowledge of Allah ﷻ, and submission to Him which would fulfill their spiritual needs.

This prayer should be recited regularly and in one's *qunūt*, and it is good for a person to remember this whenever they can during the day, especially when one feels grateful for their parents.

The training parents provide their children—particularly during childhood—is very important because a child is like a clean slate that is ready to accept every impression. Our character as adults is largely influenced by our upbringing as children, even though we might not realize it.

3 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 348.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 74, P. 79.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 24.

STOP AND REFLECT: What does upbringing and training mean? Can you think of other people who support parents in the upbringing of their children?

PARENTS AS ALLAH'S AGENTS

Parents play the role of Allah's agents because although Allah ﷻ is the One who ultimately gives everyone life, blesses them, feeds them, clothes them, and gives them happiness; as children, He does all of this through the parents.

When we are ungrateful to our parents, we are actually selfish and ungrateful to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ reminds us in the Qur'ān specifically why we must be grateful to our mothers. He says:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

"And We have enjoined upon people concerning their parents: Their mother carries them through weakness upon weakness, and their weaning takes two years. Give thanks to Me and to your parents. To Me is the return." [6]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "A person who hurts one's parents, hurts me; and the one who hurts me, hurts Allah; and whoever hurts Allah is cursed." [7]

GROWING UP

Our parents usually look after themselves. They work, earn money, buy food and clothes, pay the bills, and look after their own home. When we are younger, we cannot pay the rent or even afford our own meals. Therefore, we depend on them to provide for us, and out of their love they do everything we need. Our sense of security and confidence also comes from their presence (even if we do not realize or acknowledge that). If it were not for their love and care, most of us would not grow up being healthy, well-mannered, or successful in life.

As we begin to grow into teenagers and get older, we must realize that no one has perfect parents, and parents are human just like us. They are older and wiser, and usually only want what is good for us based on their past experiences. They have lived longer, and understand the challenges of being an adult much better than us.

There are times when you may disagree with what your parents are telling you to do. This is okay and often natural. But often, these disagreements can turn into conflict and arguments. Sometimes, these disagreements can severely damage the relationship that children have with their parents.

6 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 14.
7 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il,* Vol. 15, P. 193.

Here are some tips for how to effectively interact with our parents—keeping in mind the Islamic obligations and recommendations:

If they call you, set aside other things, stand up, and go to them to see what they need.

Never raise your voice at them, even if you are emotional. This can be very difficult when you are angry, but remember that these are the times that could be your biggest tests.

Do not interrupt them when they are speaking.

Never insult, argue, or shout at them. If you want to disagree with them about something, do so in an indirect way while maintaining perfect respect and etiquette.

Sometimes, you may think that your parents' viewpoint is outdated or ill-informed. But always remember that they are more experienced than you. Remember that if they are telling you something that you do not like, it is not (typically) because they are trying to be mean. They are looking out for your best interests—just like they always have! You might not see that right now, but try to be calm and patient. Dismissing what they have to say without giving it proper consideration might be an act of arrogance.

Do things to help them without waiting to be asked first. Always prioritize them over your friends. The more love and respect you show them, the less severe your conflicts will be.

Thank them often and pray for them every day. The Qur'ān gives us the examples of Prophets such as: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, ʿĪsā, and Yaḥyā ﷺ who made it a point to pray for their parents, and let others know that doing good to parents was an important part of their identity. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ used to pray for their parents, and performed many acts of kindness toward them, whether they were alive or had passed away.

WHERE DISOBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY

The only time we can disobey our parents is if they tell us to do something that is forbidden *(ḥarām)*. This is because obedience to Allah ﷻ comes first.

For example, if we are *bāligh* (have reached the age of responsibility) and our parents tell us to shave our beard (for boys), or not observe the Islamic dress code *(ḥijāb)*, or not get up for the *Fajr* prayers, or not fast in the month of Ramaḍān, then we must not obey them. But even when we disobey them if they are telling us to sin, we must not be rude to them. We have to politely refuse and try to explain our reasons to them, and just follow the rulings of Allah ﷻ.

CONCLUSION

Parents are a great blessing from Allah ﷻ. They provide us with love and support throughout our lives. They care for us and help guide us in every way they can.

Islam identifies our duty toward them and calls for kind behavior, pointing out that much of our success depends on these positive interactions with them. Our affectionate, respectful, and self-controlled behavior towards them pleases Allah ﷻ, and in turn He will shower us with blessings in this life and the Hereafter. Many successful people relate their achievements in life, and great careers to the goodness they showed to their parents, and refer to this as the secret to their prosperity.

Activity 3.1a: Reflection

DIRECTIONS: Develop guidelines for children and parents to interact with each other in an Islamic way. This activity can be done with a partner. For example: Make sure to listen to what the other person is saying before reacting.

1. Develop a list of guidelines that you can offer teenagers on how to effectively deal with conflicts with their parents.

2. Now develop a list of guidelines that you can offer parents of teenage children on how to effectively deal with conflicts with their teenagers.

Activity 3.1b: Being Good to my Parents

1. What are some examples when you might not act the best with your parents? (You will not be sharing this)

2. What are some examples of things you do to help your parents?

3. What are some things you would like to try and do more of to be good to your parents?

4. For the upcoming week, write down when you could have been better at respecting and loving your parents. Also keep track of when you do something good toward your parents.

	When you were respectful	When you could have done better
SUN		
MON		
TUE		
WED		
THU		
FRI		
SAT		

5. **End of the Week Reflection:** How did you do this week? How can you try to improve more in the future to become even better with your parents?

3.2 Friendship

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Recognize how good friends are a blessing from Allah ﷻ.
- Explain why we should surround ourselves with people who remind us of Allah ﷻ.
- Outline some examples of true friendships.
- Explain why we should be careful when we use humor with others.
- Develop strategies for complex social situations.

Islam encourages us to make as many good friends as we possibly can

Relationships are among the most significant blessings that Allah ﷻ has bestowed on human beings; and from the various relationships which we have, friendships are very important. Like with every blessing that Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon us, if we misuse it, it will be harmful for us in this world and the Hereafter.

A friend is someone we know personally, spend time with, know their character, and have a special 'love' or affection toward them. As human beings, we meet and greet and know many people in our lives, but only a few of them are close enough to us such that they are able to influence us in one way or another.

Islam encourages us to make as many good friends as we possibly can. Luqmān, while advising his son, said to him: *"O my son, take a thousand friends, and even a thousand is not enough; but do not [willingly and unnecessarily] make even one enemy, as even one enemy is too many."* [1]

The reason for this is because friendships have many advantages and benefits, and having no friends can be detrimental. However, it is not important to just have friends—we need to have the right friends. In this lesson, we will learn more about "who" we should take as friends, and who we should not. We will also discuss the effects of peer pressure.

CHOOSING FRIENDS

There are two major things we need to remember when choosing our friends:

- Our friends should be such that they influence us positively.
- Our friends should not make us feel uncomfortable, or pressure us to act differently to what is right.

Some of the characteristics of good friends are:

1. They should be believers, and constantly remind us of Allah ﷻ. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ narrated that once a companion asked Prophet ʿĪsā ؑ: "O Messenger of Allah! What type of friends are the best?"

He replied: "Those who when you see them, they remind you of Allah; their speech increases your knowledge; and their actions encourage you toward the Hereafter." [2]

Imām as-Sajjād ؑ said: "Beware of the companionship of the sinful (those who are disobedient to Allah), and of helping the unjust." [3]

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 13, P. 414.
2 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, P. 44.
3 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah,* Vol. 12, P. 128.

2. Be friends with those who use reason, not those who act on passion and emotion. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: "The most goodness and righteousness is found in the company of people of reason and understanding." [4]

3. Befriend those who are loyal and trustworthy, and those who have your best interest at heart. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: "Befriend one who gives you a good image, and do not befriend one who uses you to boost their own image." [5]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

These traditions give certain characteristics of people who make good friends. They also tell us what we need to be like so that we can be good friends for others. How can you adopt these qualities in your own life?

CAN WE BEFRIEND NON-MUSLIMS?

Our classmates at school or teammates in sports or other teams are often non-Muslims. Can we be friends with non-Muslims?

The important thing to remember in this situation is how that friend is influencing us. There is nothing wrong with having a non-Muslim friend if they are not influencing us to do the wrong thing. For example, a non-Muslim student who is studious and obedient and loving to their parents may have a (limited) good influence on us when it comes to these issues. At the same time, having a non-Muslim friend who is disobedient to their parents or careless about their studies may in fact be detrimental to us. So one of the important criteria when making friends is to reflect on their influence on us.

Of course, the ideal situation is that we have Muslim friends who share our ethical and spiritual values, and are also a good influence on us in our practical daily lives.

PEOPLE WE SHOULD NOT HAVE AS FRIENDS

In order to determine who is a good friend or not, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

"Do not refer to a person as your friend with the true stamp of friendship until you have tested them in three matters: test them in a way that they get provoked and angry so that you may see whether their anger takes them away from the right into wrong; test them with the dīnār and dirham [in money matters]; and travel with them." [6]

We learn from this *ḥadīth* that we should be very careful when choosing the people who are in our closest circle. It is only through experience that we can really come to know what someone is truly like.

4 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Vol. 1, P. 201.
5 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 73, P. 267.
6 Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Al-Amālī,* P. 646.

Imām ʿAlī said: *"In times of difficulty, a friend is tested and tried."*[7] This means that when we are faced with a difficulty, we will be able to see the true colors of our friends, and someone who abandons us is not a true friend.

Imām as-Sajjād summarized the kinds of people we should not befriend when he said:

- Beware of and do not associate with a person who tells lies. They are like a mirage who makes near for you what is far, and makes far to you what is near.
- Beware of and do not associate with an immoral person because they will sell you at the price of a morsel or less than that.
- Beware of and do not associate with a miser because they will deprive you of their wealth when you are truly in need of it.
- Beware of and do not associate with a fool because they may want to help you, but will end up harming you [in the process].
- Beware of and do not associate with a person who disregards one's family because such a person is cursed in the Book of Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, in three places.[8]

We should keep in mind that people can change and be positively influenced. There may be someone who does not meet all of the criteria of a good friend, however, being friendly, maintaining a relationship with them, and being on our best behavior when interacting with them can result in a positive influence on their personality and life. At that point then, we can consider strengthening our friendship with them. However, we need to ensure they are not influencing us negatively, and we should slowly see some positive impact on them over time. For example, if a friend is struggling with listening to *ḥarām* music, or reciting their daily prayers, but they want to change, and they never discourage you from doing the right thing, then staying friends with them could be a positive influence.

BEING SELECTIVE WITHOUT JUDGING OTHERS

In choosing close friends wisely, we have to avoid becoming judgmental and thinking of ourselves as better than others. Imām as-Sajjād once advised his companion, Zuhrī, as follows:

"If Shayṭān tempts you [to think] that you are better than other Muslims, then say (to yourself) that whoever is older than you has exceeded you in faith and righteous deeds, thus they are better than you. If you are older than them, then say (to yourself) that you have exceeded them in sins, thus they are better than you. Finally, if they are the same age as you, then say (to yourself) that you are sure about your sins, but do not know about theirs, so why should you leave your certainty for a doubt."[9]

However, at the same time, Islam gives us a clear criterion for what are right and wrong beliefs, and what are right and wrong actions. If my friend starts to doubt the foundational beliefs of Islam, and is not open to the proofs that I present to them, then I may need to limit my relationship with that person. This is not judging that person, but rather protecting myself from a potential major harm. Or, for example, a friend may go through a phase where they are watching inappropriate content on the internet and speaking to me about it. In this situation, I should limit my interactions with that person so that I am not provoked to watch the same things. I should not judge them, as they may repent and stop this action later on, and I myself may be making other mistakes in my life. However, without judging them, I should protect myself from the significant harm of being exposed to something that could harm my spiritual well-being.

7 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Ḥadīth #6472.
8 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 376.
9 Shaykh Ṭabarsī, *Al-Iḥtijāj*, Vol. 2, P. 152, Ḥadīth #191.

PEER PRESSURE

Friends can have a powerful influence on us. The Noble Prophet ﷺ said that:

"A person follows the same creed as their friend, so carefully consider who it is that you befriend."[10]

Sometimes it is not only our close friends who influence us—it can even be people we do not know so well who can have an impact on us. In order to befriend someone, or be part of a group or a 'gang,' some people may let go of their principles and beliefs. Or a person might do what others want so that they are accepted. These kinds of friendships are usually baseless, and end bitterly for everyone.

For example, let's say that the 'coolest kid' in the class says to you: *"Come on! None of us are going to math class today. Who wants to write that quiz anyways? We are going to take a walk and get lunch instead. Come with us!"* Do you end up doing what you know is right and go to math class—quiz and all? Or do you give in to their peer pressure, and go with them?

We may have already faced such situations where we have to make some challenging decisions. Making decisions on our own is hard enough, but when other people get involved and try to pressure us one way or another it can be even harder. People who are our age, like our classmates, are called peers. When they try to influence how we act, or get us to do something, it is called 'peer pressure.' It is something everyone has to deal with—even adults.

TYPES OF PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure comes in three different forms; and each of these can be negative or positive:

- **Direct:** For example, a person tells someone what they should do.
- **Indirect:** These are not always obvious, but a group of people might have certain habits, or do certain activities together. When you are with a different crowd of people, you may not do those particular things.
- **Self-motivated:** Putting pressure on yourself to fit in with a desired group of friends or other individuals.

STOP AND REFLECT: Which type of peer pressure do you think media pressure to conform to certain standards (clothing, hairstyle, demeanour) falls into? Is it always negative, or can it be positive at times?

Indirect and self-motivated peer pressure are more difficult to recognize because no one is directly telling you what to do. We have to be aware of people's influence over us and remember that Allah ﷻ is the only One we should truly follow. We need to reflect on our actions every day, and think about what motivated us to do them.

STOP AND REFLECT: Which type of peer pressure do you think is the most difficult to recognize when it is happening?

10 *Al-Amālī,* P. 518.

HOW TO HANDLE PEER PRESSURE

As was discussed, not all peer pressure is bad. Your peers may encourage you to wake up on time for prayers, or teach you a way of learning a math problem in school. The peer pressure we have to resist is the negative pressure.

We will discuss some ways how to handle negative peer pressure below:

1 Just say "no"

It is tough to be the only one who says "no" to peer pressure, but we can do it. Paying attention to what Allah ﷻ says about those things that are right and wrong can help us make the correct decision and do the right thing. Inner strength, strong belief, and self-confidence can help us stand firm, walk away, and resist doing something which we know is wrong. It can be helpful to practice what to say to others who may be pressuring us to do something bad, or to simply remove ourselves from situations that we do not want to be in. For example, if someone wants to play *ḥarām* music around you, then tell them to turn it off; and if that does not work, then leave that area.

2 Be okay with not following the majority

What the popular people in a group, or the majority are doing is not always the best option, and can often be the wrong thing. Throughout history, we know that people of truth have often been in a minority in practice. Sometimes, the most difficult test was the one they faced where they had to stand up against the majority and resist their path, although they knew they would not be in the "in" group, and could even face death as a result of their perseverance.

Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ said: *"O Hishām! If there is a walnut in your hand, and the people say that it is a pearl (in your hand), then this (saying of theirs) will not provide you any benefit because you know that it is a walnut. Similarly, if there is a pearl in your hand and people say that it is a walnut, there will be no harm to you because you know that it is a pearl."*[11]

STOP AND REFLECT: How can this *ḥadīth* be used to help us understand peer pressure, and how to deal with it?

11 *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, P. 285.

3 Choose our friends wisely

Islam encourages us to choose our friends wisely as a way to protect our souls. If our friends are good, then we will get positive pressure from them to become better human beings and practicing Muslims. One way to think about whether your friends are positive influences or not is to compare what you do at home with what you do when you are with them. If they are making you do things that you are uncomfortable with, or are not aligned with Islam, then this is not positive. If you are continuing to do righteous things or even better actions—like taking your prayers more seriously, or talking with kindness and good language to others—then this is very good.

4 Talk to a trusted adult

If we continue to face negative peer pressure and we are finding it difficult to handle, then we should talk to someone whom we trust. If we made a mistake or did something forbidden, then we must remember that Allah ﷻ is All-Forgiving, and we should sincerely repent to Him. Talking to a parent, scholar, teacher, or school counsellor who shares the same values can also help us feel better, and prepare us for the next time that we may face negative peer pressure. We must also remember that Allah ﷻ sees everything we do, and He knows when we are struggling, even if no one else sees it. When we make the right decision in a difficult situation, then Allah ﷻ will reward us, as this is a test for us.

STOP AND REFLECT: How has social media changed which "peers" influence us? Hint: These may not always be our friends.

Social media has brought the pressure of media and fashion closer to us. For example, if a celebrity is wearing a new style and it comes up on our feed, then we might feel like emulating them. Sometimes our peers can do things like this as well. We might follow or befriend people in a similar age group that we may or may not know. Their lifestyles and choices can influence and shape our actions in ways that normally we would not have considered. These influences are often indirect or self-motivated. For example, people may be trying to pressure others to buy a certain brand of something, or perform a particular activity, especially if they are a celebrity or influencer. We might also feel self-motivated pressure when we see what other people are doing and want to act in the same manner.

We have to keep in mind that we do not know what anyone's life is truly like, and that social media puts pressure on people to share their lives and make them look amazing. Remember that everyone's life has some challenges and difficulties in it, even if we cannot see what they are. We need to use these challenges in this world to get closer to Allah ﷻ; and we should try to surround ourselves with friends and people who remind us of our true goal and purpose in life.

Activity 3.2a: Peer Pressure

Fill out the chart below with examples of positive and negative peer pressure. Some examples have been provided for you, but try to complete every box.

Type of Peer Pressure	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
DIRECT	**In-Person:** A classmate tells you to listen to a harām song. **Media/Online:** Someone messages you and tells you to post more pictures of yourself with make-up.	**In-Person:** **Media/Online:**
INDIRECT	**In-Person:** **Media/Online:**	**In-Person:** **Media/Online:** Your friend sends you a picture and tells you how they started hiking with their family outdoors. This inspires you to start hiking.
SELF-MOTIVATED	**In-Person:** You convince yourself that your cultural food makes your breath smell bad, so you throw out the food that your mom packed you for lunch. **Media/Online:**	**In-Person:** **Media/Online:**

CHAPTER 4

Relationships and Etiquettes

4.1 Lying and its Exceptions

4.2 Arguments

4.3 Trustworthiness

4.4 Illness and Visiting the Ill

4.1 Lying and its Exceptions

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Recognize the evils of lying as mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān.
- Identify exceptions to lying.
- Analyze scenarios involving lying.

TAWRIYAH: Double entendre—when words mean something other than what they appear

TAQIYYAH: Where one is allowed to conceal their faith for the greater good

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ۝

"O you who believe! Observe God-consciousness, and be with those who are true (in their words and deeds)."[1]

...فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ ۝

"...So avoid the abomination of idols, and avoid false speech."[2]

In the above verse of the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ associates lying with worshipping idols. Just like we are so careful about staying away from alcohol and idol worshipping, and would never come near these things, we should have the same attitude toward lying and false speech.

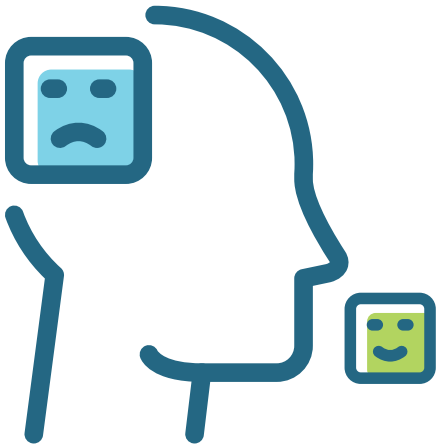
THINK, PAIR, SHARE

In this verse, why do you think lying is considered such a grave sin along with these other sins?

Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ؑ, the eleventh Imām, said: *"Wickedness was put inside a house, and the key (to its door) was rendered to be lies."*[3]

If you can imagine all of the sins being locked inside a warehouse, and the key to that warehouse being lying.

One of the major dangers of lying is that it leads to multiple other sins.



In a grade 7 lesson, we learned the evils of lying, and how lying in Islam is seen as a mortal sin. Even though that is the general rule, in this lesson we will look at some examples where telling the truth, in its complete form, may not be the best course of action.

WHEN LYING IS PERMISSIBLE

In certain specific circumstances, lying is not only allowed, but it may even become compulsory. However, in such cases, one must try to first use *tawriyah* which means 'double entendre' where the words said are not what they appear to mean, but rather mean something else. This has to be done for a greater cause. But if this is not possible, then one can lie in the below situations:

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tawbah (9), Verse 119.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥajj (22), Verse 30.
3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 72, P. 263.

1. To save an innocent person from an oppressor

This is a situation where by telling a falsehood one can stop an oppressor from oppressing an innocent person. This should be used sparingly, and does not count as lying which is impermissible.

One day, someone was sitting on the side of a road when he saw a person running away from oppressive people. After the man passed by him, he went and sat on the other side of the street. When those people chasing the man saw this witness, they came to him and asked him whether he saw anyone pass by, so that man replied: *'Since I have been sitting **here**, I have not seen anyone.'*

This above example shows us 'how' to use double entendre (which is when your words have a different meaning) in such a situation. Since the time when the person went to the other side of the street, no one had passed him. So by 'here' he meant specifically that particular place which he was sitting in at that moment, not before, but the oppressors probably understood it to mean that their victim had not come by there. Thus, he may have been saved by this person's words.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Lying is not allowed except when defending (an oppressed person against) the evil of the oppressors, and when resolving a conflict between two people."*[4]

2. Resolving a conflict between two people

If a person can make reconciliation between two people without lying, then one should do so. But if there is no other way of doing this, then a person should use *tawriyah*, and if need be, one can even distort the truth. It is not permissible to go and tell a believer that another believer has said something bad about them. Instead, a person should try to make peace between two people even if it means bending the truth about what they said in regards to each other. For example, if someone asks you: *"Did that person say anything negative about me?"* Now let us say that they actually did, but you want to keep the peace between them, so you say: *"They said good things about you!"* This may not be an outright lie because they might have said some good things about them either now or in the past (even though they mainly said bad things this time around).

The Prophet ﷺ advised Imām ʿAlī ﷺ: *"Allah, the Exalted, loves lying with the purpose of reconciliation, and detests truth if it will lead to strife and discord."*[5]

4 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth #17476.
5 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 12, P. 252.
6 Shaykh Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿ al-Bayān,* Vol. 6, P. 203.

3. In order to save one's life

If someone's life is in danger, then they are allowed to lie if there is no other way of escaping. For example, ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir, his father, his mother, and his brother were all severely tortured by the Quraysh for accepting Islam. His mother, Sumayyāh, and father, Yāsir, died under these tortures, and are considered to be the first martyrs of Islam. One day after this, ʿAmmār went to the Prophet ﷺ crying and he said: *"They did not stop torturing me until I said what they wanted!"* [Meaning that until he took the names of their gods, and talked badly about the Prophet ﷺ]. The Prophet ﷺ asked him: *"What was in your heart?"* He answered: *"I am confident in my faith (of Islam) and calm."* The Prophet ﷺ wiped the tears from his face and said: *"If they ask you to say the same thing again, then do it again."*[6]

The story of ʿAmmār shows that it was permissible for him to save his life by lying. It is also an example of *taqiyyah*, where a person is allowed to conceal one's faith for the purpose of a greater good (in this case, saving one's own life).

LIMITS

In these cases above, the use of double entendre, or in some cases lying, is meant for very critical cases where the seriousness of lying is secondary to something more important, like the necessity for believers to save lives or have good relationships. They are not meant or allowed to be used for minor issues. Someone who frequently uses double entendre will eventually be seen by others as a tricky, manipulative person whose words cannot be trusted.

Activity 4.1a: Scenarios

DIRECTIONS: Read the following scenarios, then answer why the decision might be difficult for the person, and what they should do in the situation. Then, discuss your answers with the class.

1. Layla is noticing that it is becoming more and more common for her classmates to lie. They lie about each other, and even to the teacher. There are some girls in her class who do not do this, but she is not really sure how to talk to them. What should Layla do?

2. Sajjad's friend did not do his own homework and wants to copy the answers from Sajjad's notes. What should Sajjad say to his friend?

3. Batul's mom asks her to watch her younger brother while she goes to get something from the store. When she leaves, Batul's favorite TV show is coming on, but her younger brother wants her to play with him. What should Batul do?

4. Abbas realizes that if he tells his parents he is not feeling well, then he can avoid doing his house chores. How is this lying? What is the best thing for him to do?

Activity 4.1b: Skits

Create a skit where a person has to decide whether to break another person's trust or promise, or do the right thing, using the examples above, or your own examples. After your skit, tell the class what was the most difficult about your decision. Use the rubric below to guide your skit.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
BODY LANGUAGE/ ETIQUETTE	Struggled to maintain respectful language during the dialogue/ skit.	Language used was somewhat respectful, but left room for improvement.	Language used was respectful, but body language could have been better.	Maintained respectful language and body language during the dialogue/skit.
GRAMMAR	There are 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There are 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There are 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There are no grammatical mistakes in the poster/script.
ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES / ACCURACY	Content does not meet the Islamic Principles mentioned in the lesson.	Content meets the Islamic Principles however, there is a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented meets almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented suits all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
CREATIVITY	Skit lacked organization and cohesiveness.	Skit was presented with some creatively, but left the audience wanting more.	Skit was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked cohesiveness.	Skit was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of content and cohesiveness.
QUALITY	Content presented was not convincing or compelling.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose and lacked quality.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Content presented was extremely compelling and convincing.

4.2 Arguments

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Contrast positive and negative arguments.
- Determine what kind of topics we should and should not have opinions about.
- Recognize the consequences of arguing.
- Establish constructive arguments while having good etiquette.
- Determine appropriate responses to different situations when arguing.

Activity 4.2a: Pre-Reading Questions

1. Can arguments be useful?

2. When are arguments counterproductive?

3. What are some of the reasons that people argue which may not be good?

4. How is being arrogant related to arguing?

Arguments can sometimes be positive, but most of the time they are negative. In this lesson, we will explore different reasons why people argue.

Respectful discussions where you disagree with another person can sometimes be beneficial if you are both trying to understand what is right. For example, if you are having a discussion about trying to understand a book better or learn more, then it can be good to have a healthy dialogue, as long as both people are being respectful, and are open to learning. It can also be good to try to get others to understand your point of view on a matter.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Connect (or compare) one opinion against another—from this process you will discover the truth."*[1]

This is particularly applicable to people who are qualified to have opinions, such as two scholars who are for example experts in the commentary *(tafsīr)* of the Qurʾān and are discussing a particular meaning of some verse or word; or two scientists who have developed competing theories to explain one of the natural phenomenon in Allah's universe. It is important that those who have such discussions are genuinely seeking the truth in a particular matter.

Let us now look at some scenarios where arguments or quarrels are better to be avoided.

1. Sometimes we feel that we know the truth and need to share it with others, but then when others do not agree, an argument erupts. As Muslims though, we should share the truth, but we are also discouraged from trying to persuade someone who is not willing or ready to be convinced. The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have told us that: *"If a person meets Allah ﷻ with these three qualities, they will enter Paradise from whichever gate they wish: the one whose manners are good; the one who fears Allah ﷻ when in public and when alone; and the one who avoids quarrelling even when they are in the right."*[2]

   When we meet such people who are not willing to listen, then instead of arguing and quarrelling pointlessly with them, we should graciously avoid getting into any discussion with them. Perhaps through our good conduct, and the guidance of Allah ﷻ, they will come to accept the truth.

2. Sometimes we feel threatened by someone else, and in order to show ourselves as being strong or in control we do not concede to the truth when it is presented to us. We feel that if we acknowledge what they are telling us, then we will be perceived as weak. However, as Muslims, we are encouraged to submit to the truth—however painful it may be. We cannot be stubborn in such matters.

3. Certain times, we may argue and rebel when we want to be heard, but feel like no one is listening to us so we feel frustrated. This can stem from anger, craving attention, or other reasons. By being careful of our reactions and emotions, we can analyze the intentions behind our arguments and see whether they are really justified or not, and what the consequences could be. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Protect yourself from anger for its beginning is insanity, and its end is remorse."*[3]

   If we need more attention from our family members, we can try to show them love and respect, and communicate our needs more openly with them.

4. Sometimes we get defensive and argue when we are criticized about something we have done. This shows that we have pride in our hearts and insincere intentions, because if we were purely doing something for the sake of Allah ﷻ, we would be happy if our mistakes are pointed out to us, as it will help us do better and improve for next time. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Amongst my brothers, my favorite ones are those who inform me of my shortcomings and defects."*[4]

It is our duty and responsibility to keep our promises and speak the truth

1 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Vol. 1, P. 158, Ḥadīth #2567.
2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 300.
3 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Ḥadīth #2635.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 74, P. 282.

5. Oftentimes, we are completely ignorant of an issue, yet we argue for the sake of arguing.
6. There is only one truth, but sometimes, we may have access to just a part of it even though we think we have found the whole truth. This ignorance can make us feel as if we are right and everyone else is wrong. This is arrogance and is disliked by Allah ﷻ. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said: *"Avoid arguing, because it makes your heart busy (away from remembering Allah), leads to hypocrisy, and creates grudges."*[5]
7. Sometimes we are bored and have nothing to talk about so we start arguing about issues that have no relevance in this world or the next. Idle talk is also discouraged, because it is a waste of time and can negatively affect our relationships.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about some examples of arguments that people have due to nationalistic attitudes (such as: my country/ethnicity is somehow better than yours). What is the root cause of such arguments?

Now analyze some examples of arguments that people have around sports and sporting teams. Sometimes, such arguments can even lead to violence. What is the root cause of these disagreements?

EFFECTS OF BEING ARGUMENTATIVE

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think are some of the consequences of arguing a lot?

Entering into arguments unnecessarily has many effects on society in general, and on an individual level in particular. Some of these effects are:

- It leads to animosity between the people arguing, which can then lead to a lack of trust and co-operation—especially if the arguments are happening between family or friends.
- It leads to the faults of people being exposed, and therefore the erosion of trust between individuals.
- It can waste a lot of time, and often perpetuates ignorance and malice.
- It brings about enmity: even though we may be trying to convince a person about the truth, if we are very argumentative, we may end up driving people away from us.

5 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 301.

PREVENTING QUARRELS

As Muslims, we are encouraged to stop arguments to the extent that we can even make use of double entendre *(tawriyah)*, or in extreme cases bend the truth, in order to bring believers closer. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

"And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully toward the other, then fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably. The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren, and be careful of (your duty toward) Allah that perhaps you may receive mercy."[6]

Allah ﷻ says in the last part of this verse that we have to promote peace between the believers.

HOW CAN WE STOP BEING ARGUMENTATIVE?

There are several ways in which one can stop being argumentative, some of these are:

- Agree to disagree when there is no point in arguing.
- Only have discussions when the intent from you or the other party is to gain knowledge, or increase understanding.
- Avoid arguments and discussions where one has little or no knowledge.
- Accept criticism gracefully and thankfully, and view them as opportunities to improve oneself, not as personal attacks.
- Avoid talking back in anger or frustration. Instead, discuss disagreements when one is calm. Be willing to accept scolding in anger (even when one is right, or has not done anything wrong) if it is from a parent or someone in authority; and discuss the matter calmly once tempers have cooled down. Arguments are often more lethal when one is angry, so they should be avoided. Try to be very passive toward an angry person in order to not antagonise them.
- Avoid places of idle talk and ignorance especially online chat rooms, or arguments on social media; and similarly avoid people who like to argue.

ARGUMENTS ARE NOT ALWAYS BAD

We should remember that engaging in mannered, constructive debates in order to defend or promote Islam is a highly rewarding act. For example, if we have a friend who genuinely wants to learn about Islam, or who accuses Islam but is genuinely interested in getting an answer, then it is very good to talk to them about the religion, especially if we are knowledgeable in this regard. Such an occasion might even be a great opportunity to gain knowledge over matters that we are ignorant of.

6 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verses 9-10.

Activity 4.2b: Scenarios

Consider the scenarios below. Reflect on how things could be done differently in each situation, then discuss with a partner or group.

1. Amir's parents tell him that he cannot stay out past 10pm. He gets upset and argues with them in a way that is not polite at all. What should he do instead?

2. Sahar gets into a lot of arguments with her younger brother. They both always think that they are right. How can she work on this?

3. Asad knows that his friend is often wrong about the things that he says. When Asad tries to correct him, they often get into arguments. What are some ways in which he can explain his points better?

Once you have discussed the above scenarios, independently create your own scenario below, and a reflection of how it could be handled better.

SCENARIO:

REFLECTION:

Activity 4.2c: Debate Preparation

DIRECTIONS: Write some notes on what people might argue for or against in regards to each of the topics below. Then, pick one of the statements to debate further: create a debate statement indicating whether you are for or against that along with a brief introduction as to why. Provide at least one reference or resource to support your argument.

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE
Teachers should not give homework to students who understand the lesson well in class.		
Social media does more harm than good.		
Students should always be allowed to have notes with them when they take their tests.		
We should have school all year-round with many short breaks, instead of one long summer vacation.		

DEBATE STATEMENT:

ELABORATION:

4.3 Trustworthiness

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify what it means to be trustworthy.
- Compare the rights of Allah *(ḥaqqullāh)* and the rights of people *(ḥaqqun-nās)*.
- Recognize the different types of trusts in Islam.
- Analyze why it is important to be trustworthy in difficult situations.

A STORY ABOUT PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

Throughout his youth, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ worked as a shepherd. He would take his herd of sheep every morning to graze, and then bring them back at sunset.

One day, a companion said to him: *"O Muḥammad! I found a nice green field recently. Let us take our herds there tomorrow. What do you think?"*

"Good idea," the Prophet ﷺ agreed.

The next morning, when the Prophet ﷺ reached the field, his friend had not arrived yet. The herd began pushing toward the field, but the Prophet ﷺ held them back. This was not an easy job, but the Prophet ﷺ and his friend had planned to visit this field together, and the Prophet ﷺ was not one to break a promise.

When his friend arrived, he noticed that the Prophet ﷺ was holding back his herd from entering the grassland. He was surprised.

He asked him: *"O Muḥammad! You arrived first, so why did you not let your sheep go into the grassland?"*

The Prophet ﷺ replied: *"Due to the fact that we had decided to enter our herds together, and I did not want to break my promise."*[1]

When his friend heard this reply, he realized that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was not an ordinary person. He was different from all of his other friends, and more faithful to his words than anyone else.

The two smiled at each other, and proceeded to take their herds onto the field together, exactly as they had planned.

Pastures are full of grass; and no matter how many herds graze, there will always be plenty of grass for other herds. If the Prophet's sheep grazed on the grass sooner than those of his friend, the second herd would not have remained hungry. However, the Noble Prophet ﷺ did not let his herd enter the pasture first in order to uphold his word.

STOP AND REFLECT: What does it mean to be trustworthy? What do you think "the rights of others" are? Can you think of some examples?

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 16, P. 224.

One of the most important social rules of Islam is trustworthiness. This trait is one of the first and most crucial traits that a believer is encouraged to practice.

There are two categories of responsibilities to fulfill in Islam: *ḥaqqullāh*—which are the rights of Allah ﷻ; and *ḥaqqun nās*—which are the rights of people.

Ḥaqqullāh are the duties that we have toward Allah ﷻ, like our daily prayers *(ṣalāh)*, and fasting in the month of Ramaḍān. If we do not fulfill these responsibilities, then we are only hurting ourselves; but if we regret our shortcomings and want to repent for them, then we need to seek forgiveness from Allah ﷻ and make up the necessary obligations.

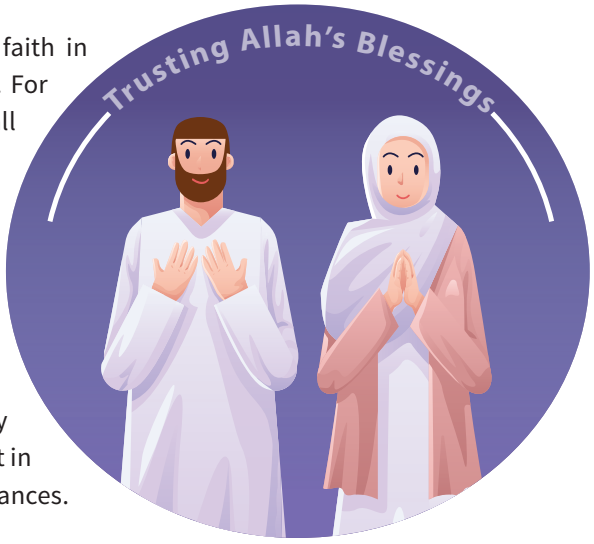
Ḥaqqun nās are those rights that Allah ﷻ has necessitated for people in relation to one another. For example, He has ordained that we should respect our parents and not speak to them in a harsh manner. Another right that is upon us in relation to others is the right of trusts.

ḤAQULLĀH:
The responsibilities that we have only to Allah ﷻ, like ṣalāh, and fasting

ḤAQQUN NĀS:
The rights that other people have over us, like the right of trust

THE DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF TRUSTWORTHINESS IN ISLAM

Trustworthiness has several meanings in different contexts. It can mean faith in the beliefs of Islam, because this is fulfilling the trust of Allah, the Exalted. For example, believing in the Day of Judgment would mean that we realize that all of the blessings we have are from Allah ﷻ, and are trusts for us to use properly in this world, after which we will be accountable and answerable for them.



Trustworthiness in the social context means to fulfill the trust that a person has been given. This trust could be in regards to wealth, such as when someone leaves money with a person; or when a bank lends money to an individual. Another example may be trust in relation to a person's health, such as when a doctor is looking after a patient who is ill. There are many other examples of trust in everyday life—like when someone confides a secret in you—but in every case, a person is obligated to fulfill the trust in all circumstances.

TYPES OF TRUSTS

1. **Trust of Allah ﷻ:** What is meant by the Divine trust? The scholars have a variety of opinions in this regard. Some say that it means the grace of intellect given by Allah ﷻ. The safeguarding of this trust (intellect) means that human beings should use it to recognise and obey their Creator. According to other scholars, this trust consists of the laws of Islam that Allah ﷻ sent through His final Prophet ﷺ. These laws are a Divine trust, and to guard them means to obey them faithfully.
2. **Blessing of Intellect:** The intellect or the faculty of reasoning is one of the greatest trusts that Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon human beings, and this trust demands that we continually honor it. We must not say or do anything that is against reason. If we allow our desires to conquer reason, then it is as if we have committed a breach of trust with Allah ﷻ. In regards to the safekeeping of trust with reference to the rules of Islam, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ؒ said: *"Misappropriating the trust of Allah and His Prophet ﷺ is their disobedience. As far as the breach of trust is concerned, every person is a trustee of the laws revealed by Allah."*[2]

2 Al-Qummī, ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, *Tafsīr al-Qummī,* Vol. 1, P. 272.

We should avoid being extravagant or wasteful especially with our food and money

3. **Blessings of Allah ﷻ:** These include everything from our health, property, money, family, friends, etc. The best way to be a good trustee of the blessings that Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon us is to use them according to how He advised us to utilize them. We must not do anything forbidden with them. For example, if we speak lies or say rude words with the tongue that He has blessed us with, then we are violating that trust. It is important that we use our health for good deeds, and take care of our health by following the laws of Allah ﷻ. We should avoid being extravagant or wasteful (doing *isrāf*) especially with our food and money. We should not throw away any food, or buy too many things and then not use them, nor should we buy useless things that we do not need.

We should know that in life, whatever we own is not really ours, but in fact everything belongs to Allah ﷻ, and He will ask us about how we used the blessings that He bestowed us with. Therefore, it is important that we fulfill all of our financial obligations as well, such as paying our *khums* and *zakāt* because this money is all part of the trust of Allah ﷻ. If we refuse to pay these mandatory taxes or give the prescribed charities, then it is as if we have stolen from Allah ﷻ.

BEING TRUSTWORTHY WITH OTHERS

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to be trustworthy even when it may be very difficult?

Trustworthiness is an obligation without exceptions or limitations. As the following narration shows, it is an obligation that all of the Prophets ﷺ commanded their people to uphold. Breaking a trust is not allowed in any religion, or under any circumstances. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, did not depute any Prophet except with (teachings of) truthful speech and fulfilling the trusts—whether it is the trust of a good person or an evil person."*[3]

The following narration also shows that fulfilling the trust is among a number of selected obligations in which there are no exceptions, and where there is no difference in the obligation whether the people involved are believers or non-believers. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"There are three situations where Allah ﷻ did not make any exceptions: respecting one's parents, keeping one's promises, and fulfilling the trusts."*[4]

In fact, in one narration narrated by Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumālī, Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ says that even if the killer of his father were to leave the sword with which he killed Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ in Imām as-Sajjād's trust, the Imām ﷺ would give it back to him, in order to fulfill the trust.[5]

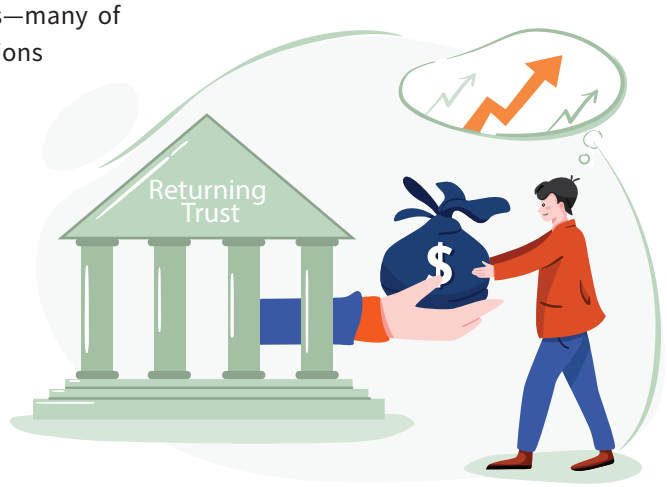
A similar tradition is narrated from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ regarding the killer of Imām 'Ali ﷺ, the Commander of the Faithful.[6]

3 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 104.
4 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 162.
5 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 75, P. 114.
6 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 5, P. 133.

Taking these narrations into consideration, it becomes very clear that there is no excuse or permissibility for the scams and tricks that some people use in order to obtain money by illegal means, or by obtaining benefits from social welfare systems without deserving them. As well, people who take loans then leave the country, or who use similar tricks to cheat banks or governments out of money will not be excused. These actions cannot be justified by saying that this is reclaiming the booty of the Muslims, or any other weak justification. There is absolutely no excuse for such actions, and individuals who engage in these things will be punished accordingly.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRUSTEES

A trustee (the person who holds a trust) has several responsibilities—many of which are common or obvious. As seen from the discussion and traditions above, we understand that it is obligatory *(wājib)* to return the entrusted thing to its owner without having damaged it, or used it for one's own benefit (if one did not have the permission to use it), and to guard and protect that thing while the trustee is in possession of it.



In summary, a trustee should:

- Guard and protect the trust from any damage, misuse or loss.
- Return the trust the way it was given, back to its lawful owner when asked to return it.
- Not use it for one's own benefit without the permission of the owner.
- Not delay in returning the trust.
- In the case of orphans, or people who cannot take care of their own property, the trustee should guard and manage the property by maintaining it, and if possible invest it to make the value of the property grow. So, for example, a trustee of an orphan should educate the orphan, train them, and if they have any money or property of theirs, it should be given back to the orphan when they reach maturity (both mental and physical). Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān regarding the believers: *"And those who are faithfully true to their trusts and their covenants."*[7]

It has been narrated that in the last hour of his life, the Noble Prophet ﷺ told Imām ʿAlī ؑ: *"O Abal Ḥasan! Return the trusted item to its owner—whether good or bad, small or big—even if it is a thread and a needle."*[8]

This is a lesson for us—and it is also a sign of a believer—that it is our duty and responsibility to keep our promises and speak the truth.

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʿminūn (23), Verse 8.
8 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 77, Pp. 275 and 418.

Activity 4.3a: Scenarios

DIRECTIONS: Read the following scenarios, then discuss why the decision might be difficult for a person, and what they should do in that situation.

1. Ahmad told his elderly neighbor that he will help him clean the lawn, but when the day comes that he is supposed to go there, he gets invited to an exciting soccer game.

2. Ruqayyah tells her friend Tahirah something embarrassing that happened to her, but asks her not to tell anyone else. Later, when their other friends are around, Tahirah wants to talk about it.

3. Hadi's parents tell him to watch his younger brother as they have to go out for some important work, but when they leave, he wants to play a video game instead.

4. Create your own scenario where a person has to decide whether to break another person's trust. Then reflect on what was difficult about the decision.

Activity 4.3b: Reflection

1. What are your strengths when it comes to trust? What motivates you to be trustworthy for those around you?

2. Has there ever been a time when you had to make a difficult decision that might break someone's trust in you? What was your final decision?

3. Imagine your younger sibling or cousin comes to you and presents a problem that they are facing, and they are unsure about what decision to make. What advice would you give them? Use evidence from the lesson in your explanation.

4.4 Illness and Visiting the Ill

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Discuss the benefits of illness.
- Recognize the importance of visiting the ill.
- Identify etiquettes of dealing with our illnesses.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Almost everyone falls ill sometime or another in one's lifetime. Although illnesses can be very difficult to bear, they are a hidden mercy from Allah ﷻ as they are an opportunity for our sins to be forgiven, and a chance for us to get closer to Allah ﷻ. In addition to shedding light on the positive side and deeper grace behind every illness, Islam has laid great emphasis on visiting and helping the sick, and promised great rewards for those who do so.

In this lesson we will discuss the benefits of illness, the importance of visiting the sick, and the etiquettes of dealing with them.

BENEFITS OF ILLNESS

STOP AND REFLECT: Why does Allah ﷻ test us in this life?

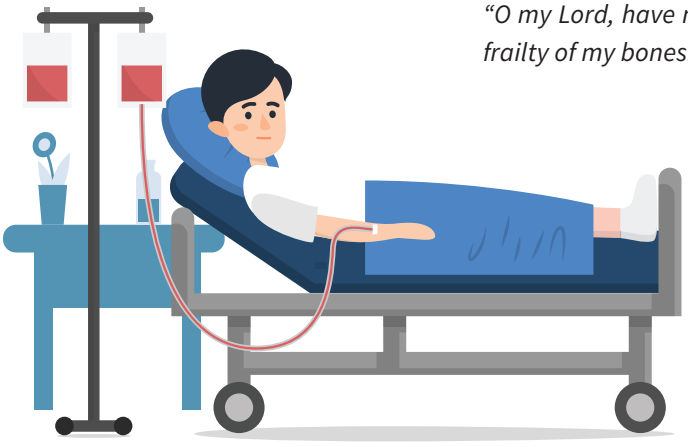
Appreciating good health

It is only when we lose something that we then miss it, and learn to appreciate what we had. When we go through an illness, we realize the true blessing of good health by remembering the days when we were healthy and then thank Allah ﷻ for them. Periods of illness can also cause us to become more careful about ourselves when we regain health. We will then naturally tend to avoid those foods, activities, or ways of life that caused our illness in the first place. This change of lifestyle is a practical way of appreciating the blessings of Allah ﷻ, and trying to become a better person. Falling ill also makes us humble as we begin to realize that we have nothing without Allah ﷻ.

In Duʿāʾ Kumayl, we recite:

يَا رَبِّ ارْحَمْ ضَعْفَ بَدَنِي وَرِقَّةَ جِلْدِي وَدِقَّةَ عَظْمِي

"O my Lord, have mercy on the weakness of my body, the thinness of my skin, and the frailty of my bones."



Purification of sins

The Noble Prophet ﷺ said:

> "The wrongdoings (sins) of a sick person fall off from them like the falling off of leaves from a tree." [1]

1 Al Mundhiriyy, ʿAbdul ʿAẓīm, *At-Targhīb wa at-Tarhīb,* Vol. 4, P. 293, Ḥadīth #56.

It is for this reason that Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ says in one of his supplications:

> *O Allah, I am not sure whether I should be more thankful to You and praise You more when I am healthy or when I am sick. When I am healthy, You allow me to enjoy Your provision, and I am able to seek Your pleasure and bounty, and perform acts of obedience that You have given me success to accomplish. But when I am ill, You test me and grant me favors: You lighten the burden of sins that weigh down my back, purify the evil deeds into which I have plunged, encourage me to reach for repentance, remind me of Your blessings upon me since I existed, and encourage me to repent so that You can erase my sins.* [2]

When we are ill, or know someone who is ill, then we have to remember that Allah ﷻ is All-Merciful, and He is showering His blessings upon the sick person. If an individual intends to do something good, but an illness prevents one from carrying that out, then one will still be rewarded because Allah ﷻ knows our intentions.

One day the Prophet ﷺ was walking when he looked up and began smiling. He was asked why he was smiling to which he explained that two angels had come down to write some rewards for a person who usually attended the congregational prayers, but they did not find him there due to an illness. They went back and reported this to the Exalted Lord. He said to them: *"Write the same rewards for him as if he was there, because if he was not ill, then he would have been present."* [3]

HOW TO DEAL WITH ILLNESSES

The discomfort experienced from an illness makes a person very easily agitated and frustrated. We tend to lose our temper quickly, and often complain about our situation to others. Take for example the sullen mood of an active young boy who sprained his ankle and is barred from any sporting activities for four weeks; or imagine the frustration of a middle-aged man who is bed-ridden for a month because of a chronic illness.

In these testing times, Islam has given us invaluable advice on how to best deal with our illness:

Know that Allah ﷻ is the One who gives and restores health

Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ, when explaining his relationship with Allah ﷻ to others, used the example of becoming well after being sick. He said: *"And when I am ill, it is He (meaning Allah) who cures me."* [4] This teaches us the importance of remembering that Allah ﷻ is the One who takes care of us and restores our health. We may make use of means such as obtaining advice from medical experts, using some medications, getting extra rest, drinking lots of fluids, etc., but all of these are means that Allah ﷻ has created for us to use and in turn show our appreciation to Him—but ultimately it is ONLY Allah ﷻ who can truly cure us.

2 *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah*, Supplication #15: When One is Sick or Visited by Distress or an Affliction.
3 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 3, P. 113.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shuʿarāʾ (26), Verse 80.

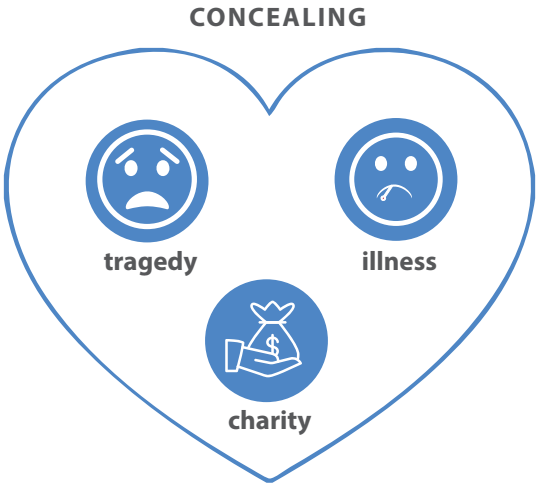
Avoid complaining to others

When we are ill, we should not complain about our situation to anyone but Allah ﷻ. In particular, we should avoid complaining to others in a way which indicates that we are unhappy about Allah's decision upon us. Instead, we should try and think of those people who are in a much worse situation than us, and then thank Allah ﷻ.

> *Allah, the Almighty, said: 'Whoever becomes sick three times and does not complain to any of their visitors, I will change their flesh to flesh that is even better (than what they had), and their blood (to become even) better than their blood (before). If I cure them, then I will cure them such that they will have no sins; and if I take them [in death], then I will take them to My Mercy.'* [5]

When Prophet Ayyūb ﷺ was severely ill for a very long time, he did not complain to anyone at all, but politely and humbly asked Allah ﷻ to have mercy on him. He has been quoted to have said: "O my Lord, harm has touched me, and You are the most Merciful of the merciful ones." [6]

Complaining about a sickness is different from informing others about it. When necessary, it is important to talk to medical experts to get their advice about what to do for certain problems. Also, you might need to inform your school or workplace about being absent due to medical issues, or you may want to ask some family members or friends to pray for your quick recovery. All of these are okay as long as they are done without complaining.



The Prophet ﷺ said:

> "From among the treasures of righteousness are concealing [three things]: One's tragedies, one's illnesses, and charity (that one gives)." [7]

On the basis of this and similar traditions, it is not advisable to openly advertise one's sicknesses to others for no reason, or to complain excessively about them. For some minor illnesses that will pass by quickly, like an occasional common cold, one will receive more rewards from Allah ﷻ by not informing others, and instead being in a state of constant prayers.

Actively work toward becoming better

We should not wait for our illness to become severe or worse before taking the necessary steps. When we are sick, we should take quick measures to recover by being careful about our diet, resting adequately, and consulting with medical experts if need be. Having a carefree attitude toward illness is in reality betraying the trust—our body—that Allah ﷻ has gifted us with; and sometimes what could have been a minor issue will turn into a major problem.

5 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 3, P. 115, Ḥadīth #1.
6 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Anbiyā' (21), Verse 83.
7 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il,* Vol. 2, P. 68, Ḥadīth # 1435.

VISITING THE ILL

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think it is so important to visit the ill? Have you ever visited someone who was sick? Has anyone ever visited you when you were not well?

Islam has placed great emphasis on visiting a sick person. It instructs us to inquire about our brothers or sisters who have not been seen in Islamic centers or social gatherings for an unusually long time. If we learn that they are ill, then we should visit them. In this section we will discuss the etiquette of visiting the sick—be they at home or in a hospital.

Before visiting, we should call the family to ask what is the most convenient time for us to go there so that we do not trouble the family or the patient. Often, the family of the patient is already struggling to care for the patient, and the last thing they want is to attend to guests at random or inconvenient times.

We should not disclose the details of the illness of the sick person to other people, and we must respect the family's wish for confidentiality if that is what they want.

We should try to take some gift along with us, even if it is simple, like a get-well card or flowers. We should keep in mind to take something suitable like a book, or healthy foods like fruits, rather than sweets or unhealthy treats that the patient should not be eating. A companion of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq narrated the following:

"One of my companions became sick, so we were going to visit him as a group. We met Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq on the way and he asked us: 'Where are you going?' We replied: 'We are going to go and visit so and so who is sick.' He said: 'Stop'—so we stopped, and he asked: 'Do any of you have an apple, or a quince, or a citron, or some perfume, or a piece of sandalwood?' We answered: 'No, we do not have any of these.' Then he told us: 'Do you not know that a sick person is comforted by anything that is gifted to them?'"[8]

Our visits should be short so that we do not make the patient feel uncomfortable. Often patients find it difficult to stay awake, or to sit up for too long. Sometimes they may require some medical needs that they have to attend to frequently, and our long stays could inconvenience them. Thus, we should make our visit quick, unless they need our company, or we can help them out in some way. Imām ʿAlī said:

"The visitor [of an ill person] who will attain the greatest reward with Allah is the one who visits briefly, unless the sick person likes the company, and wants and asks for them [to stay longer]."[9]

We should not visit someone who is ill if we ourselves are sad; nor should we engage in arguments with or in front of a sick person; nor interrogate them about their illness as this will probably make them more upset. Instead, we should visit them with a cheerful and happy face, and speak to them positively about their recovery, and give them hope.

8 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 3, P. 118, Ḥadīth #3.
9 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 3, P. 118, Ḥadīth #6.

REWARDS OF VISITING THE ILL

a) Visiting an ill person is likened to visiting Allah ﷻ Himself

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Allah, the Almighty, will say on the Day of Resurrection: 'O child of Ādam, I became sick, but you did not visit Me!' So one will ask: 'O Lord, how can I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' The Almighty will say: 'Did you not know that My servant, so and so, became sick but you did not visit them?! Did you not know that if you had visited them, you would have found Me there with them?!'"[10]

b) Forgiveness of sins

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said:

"Whoever visits a sick person, seventy thousand angels will escort them, repenting for them until they return back home."[11]

c) Reminder of the Hereafter

When we visit a sick person, we attain a realization of our own weaknesses, and the transient nature of this world where everything will one day deteriorate, and eventually die. This comprehension is healthy, as it reminds us about our final abode—which is the everlasting Hereafter—and therefore will help to keep our actions on track.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Visit the sick, and follow the funeral processions—they will remind you of the Hereafter."[12]

10 *At-Targhīb wa at-Tarhīb,* Vol. 4, P. 317, Ḥadīth #3.
11 *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 3, P. 120, Ḥadīth #2.
12 Muttaqī Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl,* Ḥadīth #25143.

Activity 4.4a: Read and Discuss

The following is an excerpt from a 2019 news article.[13] Read the article, then discuss the questions at the end.

Two in five hospital patients never have any visitors—and they take longer to recover than those who do, according to new research.

Nurses told the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) that patients are less likely to be mobile if no one comes to see them.

They also rely more on hospital staff, have fewer conversations, and are less likely to follow medical advice.

Susan Webster, a senior charge nurse at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, said: "You cannot put a price on the value of social interaction, especially for our older patients."

RVS, which spoke to 200 hospital nurses, said more effort needs to be put into supporting isolated patients.

"Volunteers offer a professional support service, encouraging mental stimulation, physical activity, and can play a significant role in both mental and physical recovery," said its director of commissioned services, Sam Ward. "It is vital that hospitals work together with volunteer service providers to make sure that patients across the country are able to access this support."

Article Discussion Questions

1. What was the purpose of the volunteer service? Why does the article claim that it is so important for patients to have visitors?

2. If societies were aware of Islamic guidelines regarding visiting the ill, and practiced these etiquettes, what effects do you think this would have on those patients?

3. Do Muslims need a service like this?

13 https://news.sky.com/story/two-in-five-hospital-patients-never-have-any-visitors-voluntary-service-says-11806767

Activity 4.4b: Review Questions

Choose the correct answers below:

1. Which of these is NOT a benefit of illness?
   - **a.** Forgiveness of one's sins
   - **b.** Practical appreciation of good health
   - **c.** Loss of appetite and therefore loss of weight

2. In dealing with the sick, we should:
   - **a.** Ask them in detail about their illness
   - **b.** Meet them with a happy and cheerful mood
   - **c.** Make the details of their illness public to others

3. In regards to the reality of visiting an ill person, it is as if one is visiting…
   - **a.** The Noble Prophet ﷺ
   - **b.** Imām Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف
   - **c.** Allah ﷻ

CHAPTER 5

Media and Entertainment

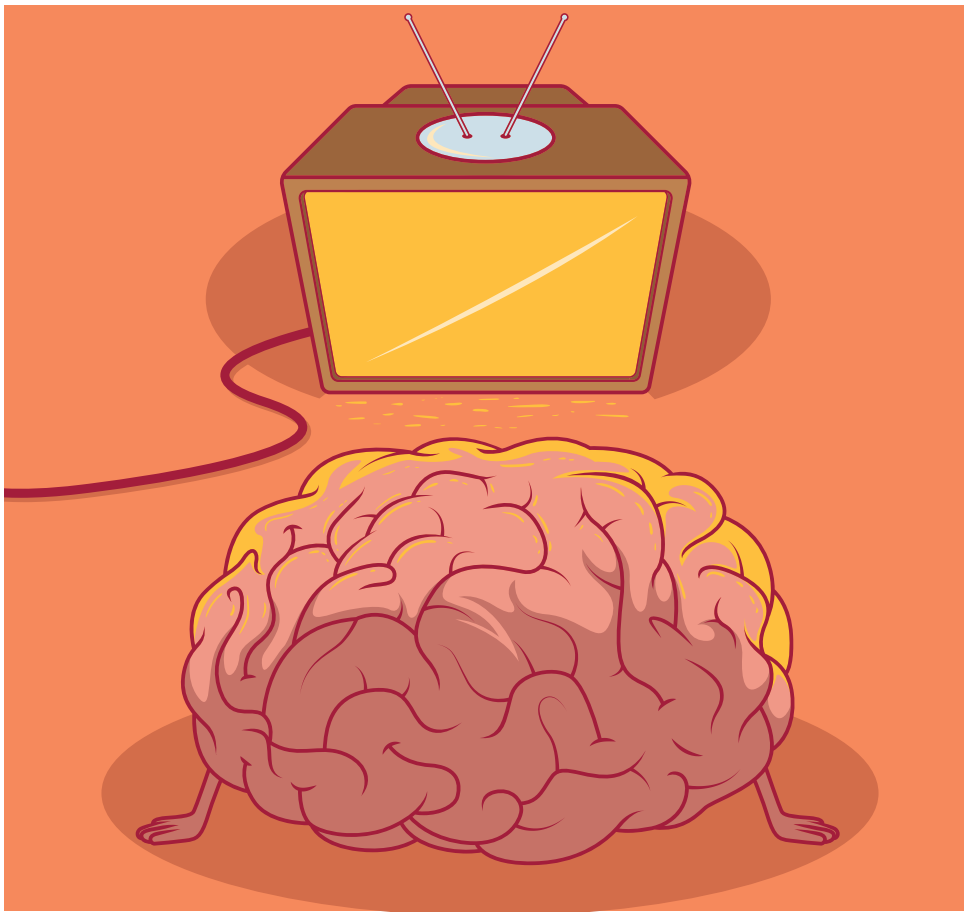
5.1 Media Literacy

5.1 Media Literacy

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify the importance and meaning of media literacy.
- Analyze the strategies that the media uses to distract us.
- Identify the meaning of subliminal messages.
- Analyze the strategies that social media uses to influence us.
- Look at the potential harmful effects of video games.



MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy, in the context of what we are learning, is using a set of tools to think critically about the information that is presented to us. In the age of technology, we have to be vigilant when it comes to what we watch and what we read, and remember that content is carefully curated to serve whoever made it. In this lesson, we are going to discuss different strategies that people use to influence us.

Like everything else that we do, we should try to consume media with a purpose. All of our actions should take us closer to Allah ﷻ, so we must maintain a balance in our lives when we are consuming media. This means that we should be thoughtful about what we watch or use, and how much time we are spending on media and entertainment.

VIDEO 1: HOW EASY IS IT FOR SOMEONE TO DISTRACT YOU?

Watch the TED Talk clip from the beginning until 4 minutes 30 seconds and then from 5 minutes 25 seconds to the end. Then discuss the following questions:

- What was the pickpocket able to do to the man?
- Was the man aware that he was dealing with someone who was a professional pickpocket?
- When someone sits in front of a screen to be entertained, how are they similar to the man who was called up to the stage? How are they different?

Follow this code to watch the videos!

VIDEO 2: SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES

Watch the clip about subliminal messages, then discuss the following questions:

- What is a subliminal message?
- Why do you think the people who make shows and music would want to give subliminal messages?
- What kind of messages do they want to give?

VIDEO 3: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA MAKES MONEY

Watch the clip about how social media makes money, then discuss the following questions:

- How does Snapchat make money?
- Why is it important for Snapchat that people spend time using their app?
- What features does Snapchat have that makes people pay attention to it more?
- Are those features good for the company?
- Are they good for the people who use Snapchat?
- How do these strategies apply to other forms of social media?

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CAN TRICK YOU

- What do the numbers in red mean?
- When users of these apps see the red notifications, what thoughts come to their mind?
- Why are they red in color?
- Who do you think designed the red notifications? What are they trying to do?
- Social media makes use of "Fear of Missing Something Important"
  - ▷ Why do they do that?
- If someone does not log in and check their notifications, then does it really matter in the long run?

VIDEO 4: POTENTIAL HARMS OF VIDEO GAMES

Watch the clip about the potential harms of video games, then discuss the following questions:

- Why does he prefer video games to real life?
- Why is he so addicted to video games?
- What problems have video games caused him?
- According to what you learn from playing video games:
  - ▷ What should you do when you come across someone you are annoyed with?
  - ▷ What kind of language is acceptable to use when you are annoyed or scared?
- What kind of morals or manners *(akhlāq)* is shown by the most popular gamers?

CONCLUSION

While we are using social media, watching shows, browsing the internet, or playing video games, it may feel good to us at first, but slowly our patterns of thinking change over time. Sometimes we might have to be more thoughtful about what we are watching; and other times, we may have to stop using some kinds of social media or playing a certain video game altogether because it is having a negative impact on us. It is important to be honest with ourselves about how we are being influenced.

Activity 5.1a: Review Questions

1. Why do we need to be careful about what we are watching?

2. What is the goal of the companies who make social media?

3. What strategies does social media use to try to achieve their goals?

4. How can playing too much be a cause of diverting us from our real purpose in life?

5. Is the “Fear of Missing Something Important” a valid fear to have on social media? Why or why not?

6. What are some of the potential harms of playing too many video games, or playing for long periods of time?

STEPS TO PERFECTION

An Islamic Curriculum For Youth

The *Steps to Perfection* 8th grade curriculum strives to build upon the development of a strong Islamic foundation, which began from the kindergarten book. In ʿaqāʾid, we take a deeper look and reflect on our souls with the concept of tawassul, learning about maʿād and the journey through death, the barzakh and resurrection. The fiqh unit continues our hands-on approach of major topics such as taqlīd, ṭahārah and najāsah, as well rules of prayer. As the lessons become more advanced, critical thinking is applied for a deeper understanding of the Islamic laws. The history unit focuses on Prophet Mūsā ﷺ and Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ with cross-curriculum akhlāq lessons that we learn from each Prophet. We continue to study the lives of the Imāms ﷺ and significant battles of history while continuing our spot-light on various personalities. The akhlāq unit continues to build positive characteristics and teaches us through Islamic guidance how to gain closeness to Allah ﷻ.

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